

LOST IN TRANSFORMATION

A critical study of two South African museums

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
GLOSSARY	ix
ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Aim.....	3
1.2 Names of events, groups, museums and objects	4
1.2.1 ‘Cultural group’	5
CHAPTER 2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 The field	7
2.2 Time and the structuration theory	9
2.3 Post-structuralism, space, place and new museology.....	11
2.4 Previous research.....	16
CHAPTER 3. A POLITICAL BACKDROP TO TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUMS.....	21
3.1 Transformation in museums.....	22
3.2. Cultural, historical and political background to Transformation	25
CHAPTER 4. MULTIPLE EXPLANATIONS OF TRANSFORMATION	36
4.1 A European structure in Africa	36
4.2 Towards segregated museums.....	41
4.3 Towards transformed museums.....	48
4.4 Transformation – a struggle for power.....	54
4.5 Making museums democratic.....	60
4.6 What was Transformation?	73
CHAPTER 5. CONTESTED PLACE AND CONTESTED MUSEUMS.....	77
5.1 Museums in the urban landscape.....	77
5.2 The Natal Museum – an anglophile monument?.....	81
5.2.1 Transforming the Natal Museum	88
5.3 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex	92

5.3.1 The Blood River Heritage Site	100
5.3.2 The Oldest House and the Andries Pretorius House	103
5.3.3 Zaylager and Amajuba	107
5.3.4 Ncome Museum	113
5.3.5 Spatial Transformation of the Msunduzi Museum.....	117
5.4 Name	119
5.4.1 The Natal Museum	122
5.4.2 Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex	123
5.5 What was Transformation of place?.....	130
CHAPTER 6. COLLECTIONS CAPTURED IN TIME	134
6.1 Contested collections.....	136
6.2 Collections during apartheid	144
6.3 Towards transformed collections	147
6.4 Collections in an emerging Transformation	151
6.5 Collections in a changing socio-political environment	156
6.6 Collections in the time of democracy	162
6.7 Reclassifying collections	173
6.8 Collections in Transformation.....	177
6.9 What was Transformation in collections?	180
CHAPTER 7. SOCIAL SPATIALISATION MANIFESTED IN DISPLAY	184
7.1 Early times.....	185
7.2 Apartheid	188
7.3 New directions.....	194
7.4 Finding a new self and a new other	200
7.5 Displaying a new nation	210
7.6 Towards the present.....	222
7.7 What was Transformation in displays?	239
CHAPTER 8. LOST IN TRANSFORMATION – A CONCLUDING DISCUSSION.....	243
8.1 A complex Transformation	243
8.2 Contested museums	249
8.2.1 The Natal Museum	250
8.2.2 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex	252
8.2.3 Contested names	255
8.3 Collections and time.....	256

8.4 Displays and space	260
REFERENCES	266
APPENDIX I: GENEALOGY OF THE MSUNDUZI MUSEUM INCORPORATING THE VOORTREKKER COMPLEX	303
APPENDIX II: PICTURES	305

PREFACE

While growing up in Sollentuna, a suburb of Stockholm in Sweden, my only dream was to become an archaeologist. Little did I know that life had a different plan for me. Suddenly, to my surprise, I found myself in South Africa. It all began when I was engaged in museum studies at the University of Uppsala. There I had the benefit of being invited by Professor Juliette Leeb du Toit of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to do an internship at the Natal Museum. Since I had already worked at a few museums in Sweden, I found it interesting to explore the international scene; but when I arrived at Pietermaritzburg airport in September 2004 I had only a vague idea about the complexity of the country that welcomed me.

Reading South African history, I grappled to make sense of the differences between the country's groups, languages, history and cultures. Eventually I realised that I simply had to accept the fluidity and constantly changing definitions of South African society. What I had imagined would be a simple case of black and white unfolded as an extremely complex web of cultures, religions, politics, economy, languages, history, heritage and relations. During my first visit I was exhausted by trying to understand a welter of different and often conflicting views. On a single day I would often feel that I had visited several countries.

It is safe to say that my experience changed my view of the world, and I was more than grateful when Professor Juliette Leeb du Toit offered me a PhD position at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I had become eager to explore the complex Transformation of South African museums, something that I had only begun to understand during my first visit. Suddenly I found myself flying between Pietermaritzburg and Sollentuna, working as an educational officer during the Swedish summer and as a PhD student in South Africa for the rest of the year. The years that have passed have been both an academic and personal journey on levels that are sometimes difficult to express. It is with a mixture of happiness and great sadness that I conclude this dissertation, knowing that life as I lived it will never be the same.

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation *Transformation*, as understood in South Africa, is investigated in the 'Natal Museum' and the 'Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex' in terms of socio-political structures, the museum as a place, its collections and displays. I have emphasised the ethnographical perspective and analysed it by using key concepts such as new museology, time, space and place. My research focuses on the perception and mediation by museum staff-members of Transformation which is compared and positioned against South African and international museological theoretical discourses.

I further explore the political backdrop to Transformation of South African museums and discuss related problems and aspects such as reconciliation, nation-building and the African Renaissance. Socio-political structures, acts, reports and policy documents are analysed over a long temporal sequence, but focus on the period 1980-2007. The long temporal sequence is a tool to capture the development connected to the museums in space and time and aims to compare and present previous developments in order to investigate how Transformation positioned itself as against the past. I hold that Transformation should be treated as an ongoing process connected to other transformation processes across time. I also propose that Transformation started earlier than previously suggested and that it is not a question of one Transformation but of many transformation processes.

The urban landscape and the concept of place and name are explored. My research examines the urban landscape from the establishment of Pietermaritzburg to study how the museums were positioned in the landscape and how this has contributed to associated meanings. The museums are treated as demarcated places in the urban landscape which are named and infused with meaning and ownership. The museums are constituted and acted out within specific socio-political structures. The dissertation suggests that the objectives of Transformation reveal themselves through negotiation and alteration of place and name.

My research explores the history of the museum collections – how objects were acquired, classified and used to materialise the museums' institutionalisation of time and what this brought about for heritage production. I investigate what did and did not change when the

museums transformed and I deconstruct the new and old objectives and socio-political ideas of collections.

I analyse displays as socio-political spaces, the agent's appropriation, and the discrepancies within dominant socio-political structures. When Transformation materialises in displays it becomes visible for the public to see. The negotiated displays show how the museum tries to visualise Transformation to the public. The discussion analyses the discussed concepts of Transformation, the structures, place, name, display and collection, and relates these to the concept of time, and to how agents create time and make it visual. I also discuss how museological writing and political speeches shape and negotiate Transformation through their articulation and how they sometimes constrain and form discrepancies to actual reality.

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I thank Dr Inga-Lill Aronsson of the University of Uppsala for encouraging me to go to South Africa, for supervising my work on a voluntary basis, and for encouraging and understanding me when I hardly understood myself. Many thanks, too, for her sense of humour!

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Staff-members at the Natal Museum and Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex enabled me to pursue this study by continually answering my questions, opening up their archives, their collections, their offices and lives for me. Without their friendliness and help my work would not have been completed. My informants alike invited me into their lives and their homes and allowed me to better understand what it is to be South African.

My thanks to the librarians and staff at the Cecil Renaud Library, the Natal Museum Library and the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex Library for their help and friendship.

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To all my friends in Sweden, South Africa and elsewhere – for entertaining me, being there in need, keeping me sane and insane, challenging me and waiting for me – thank you.

Last but not least, I express immense gratitude to mamma and pappa, whose support, encouragement, trust, love and help I cannot acknowledge enough.

GLOSSARY

Afrikaans: Originally a Dutch creole language of slaves and servants at the Cape. White settlers started to use it and it became the national language of Afrikaners and an important component of Afrikaner nationalism. The Taalmonument in Paarl is erected for the Afrikaans language. Afrikaans is the mother tongue of most Coloured people in the Cape.

Afrikaners: White Afrikaans-speaking South Africans of European (mainly Dutch) ancestry. The category has strong apartheid affiliations and many Afrikaners today prefer to call themselves Afrikaans-speakers rather than Afrikaners.

Banning orders: State-issued orders placed on organisations or individuals who were perceived to be a threat to the apartheid government. The order restricted the movement and meeting of people.

Boer: The word means *farmer* in Afrikaans and refers to White Afrikaans-speaking South Africans who today comprise (mostly) White Afrikaner farmers.

Dutch Reformed Church: A Calvinist church, mainly Afrikaans-speaking, which played a large political role in promoting Afrikaner identity and culture and separation between groups.

Great Trek: Northward migration of thousands of Boer families from the Cape Colony in the 1800s.

Homelands: Also known as native reserves or Bantustans, the homelands were land set aside exclusively for Africans. These reserves were fundamental to the logic of separate development and divided the African population into nine districts according to how ethnic groups were perceived.

Inkatha: Originally called the Inkatha Zulu Cultural National Movement, this organisation was established to preserve Zulu culture and found a large support group among those who identified themselves as Zulus. It was renamed Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in 1994.

Knopkierie: Afrikaans for a Zulu traditional weapon.

Laager: A circle in which the Voortrekkers placed their wagons, e.g. on the Great Trek, when they made camp.

Mfecane: This means a crushing or destruction and refers to the wide violence and displacement among African people in south-eastern South Africa in the early 1800s.

Nguni: The word *Nguni* is used as a collective term for the people who have historically inhabited the eastern region of Southern Africa.

Previously disadvantaged: Present term for those who under apartheid were labelled non-white, namely Indians, Coloureds and Africans. It includes White females.

Rainbow nation: A non-racial unified South Africa without social division. Coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Struggle material: Material culture representing the struggle against apartheid, often including T-shirts, pamphlets and flyers.

Township: Residential areas for black workers situated in proximity to White towns.

Tricameral parliament: Multiracial parliament implemented with the 1983 constitution adding Indian and Coloured parliamentary representation to the White parliament. The three sat separately and Africans had no representation.

Volksmoeder: *Volksmoeder* means mother of the nation. The image of the *volksmoeder* is a robust, hardworking, enduring and capable mother and wife.

Voortrekkers: Afrikaans for front trekkers or those trekking first. The term refers to the Boers who trekked out of the Cape Colony between 1830-1845 in search of independence from the British.

Zulu: Village cattle farmers who also planted crops and spoke an Nguni language. They are well known for the military state that evolved from their small clan and family-based society into an empire dominating other tribes. During apartheid the racial classification divided the African subgroups into language groups of which one was the Zulu. Resistance to apartheid also developed cultural political activities along language lines, as seen for instance in Inkatha.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC: African National Congress

BCM: Black Consciousness Movement

BEE: Black Economic Empowerment

DRC: Dutch Reformed Church

DACST: Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology

DAC: Department of Arts and Culture

DRC: Dutch Reformed Church

IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party

IKS: Indigenous Knowledge Systems

MEVM: Meetings Voortrekker Museum

MIVM: Minutes Voortrekker Museum

NMAR: Natal Museum Annual Report

NP: National Party

NVM: Notule Voortrekker Museum

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme

SAHJ: South African Historical Journal

SAMA: South African Museum Association (previously known as the Southern African Museum Association)

SAMAB: South African Museum Association Bulletin (previously known as the Southern African Museum Association Bulletin)

VMAR: Voortrekker Museum Annual Report

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

South African museums reflect a complex history extending back to the hominids and continuing with hunter-gatherer San people¹ and Khoikhoi.² During the early Iron Age³ 'Bantu speakers' introduced iron to South Africa and around 1200 AD other 'Bantu speakers', such as Nguni and Sotho-Tswana speakers, migrated to the country. In the 1400s Portuguese sailors started trading with African groups and in 1652 the Dutch East India Company settled in the Cape. The Khoikhoi objected in 1659 and tried to expel the Dutch, but a few years later Europeans started to settle inland and Huguenot refugees arrived. At the same time an extensive slave trade with Africa and Asia contributed to South Africa's emerging mixed and diverse population and heritage.

The British rule over the Cape in 1806 resulted in a group of mainly Dutch speakers (Voortrekkers) migrating to the interior of South Africa. There they established the Republic of Natalia (1839), the Orange Freestate Republic (1854) and the South African Republic (1860). The annexed areas were inhabited by Nguni and Sotho-speaking groups that clashed with the Whites: and in the republics citizenship was given only to Whites. The 1800s were turbulent under colonialism. In the area presently known as KwaZulu-Natal, Zulu-speaking groups drew other Nguni-speaking groups by force into a rapidly growing military state, especially under Shaka's reign (1817-1828). The unrest of this time is referred to in Zulu as the *mfecane* and resulted in migration and in the creation of refugees among Africans. At the same time the Jewish population increased, indentured Indian labourers (mainly Hindus) were brought to the sugarcane plantations of KwaZulu-Natal and 'passenger' Indians (mainly Muslims) arrived as traders. Chinese traders resided in the Cape where many were recruited for the mines.

The discovery of diamonds (1869) led to increased urbanisation, industrialisation and increased racial segregation. During the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) British colonial forces wanted to assume power over lucrative economic areas and were resisted by the Boers. The ensuing war resulted in massive destruction of land and many Boers were confined in

¹ About 8000 years ago.

² Pastoralists from about 2000 - 3000 years ago.

³ 250-1100 AD.

refugee/concentration camps. The aftermath of the war and the formation of the Union of South Africa (1910) saw the rise of Afrikaner nationalism. The Union negatively changed the status of black⁴ people especially, irrespective of their ethnic identity or class. Africans could no longer vote, own land, or reside in towns. 'Native reserves' were established. Natal and the Cape discriminated less against blacks. The economic depression of the 1930s was marked by racial and political intensification and South Africa became largely segregated when apartheid was officially institutionalised in 1948. National Party (NP) politics continued to restrict black people's right to vote, their right to education and domicile and their right to marriage. They were officially classified into groups dependent, e.g., on language and phenotype. There were protests against apartheid such as the Freedom Charter (1950), and the violent Sharpeville massacre (1960) and the student uprising in Soweto (1976).

The 1970s and 1980s were marked by internal opposition and violent resistance. Several anti-apartheid organisations were formed within the country and internationally. States of emergency were declared and forced removals became extensive, both in the rural 'self-governing areas' and in towns. KwaZulu became a 'self governing area' in 1977 and in the late 1980s internecine war broke out there and in Natal. During the 1980s and 1990s the segregation laws in South Africa were repealed and negotiations towards a democracy began. In 1994 South Africa officially became a democracy. The country embarked on a process of nation-building and tried to become a democratic and multicultural society where all 'ways of life' were officially accepted. Developments focused on economic and educational upliftment. South Africans are finding it difficult to unite because of past cultural, religious and ethnical differences and widespread xenophobia especially directed against African immigrants. The multicultural approach of the early democratic government has now developed into a suspicious nationalistic approach.

South Africa's complex history, very briefly outlined above, has been narrated and interwoven in archaeological, historical and museological epistemology. The museums represent different approaches; their epistemologies depend on socio-political circumstances, the geographical and cultural location of the museum, and aspects of human agency. I have tried in this dissertation to analyse these aspects of the museums in relation to Transformation.

⁴ The term *black* has a political meaning and denotes those groups that were previously disadvantaged (Africans, Indians and Coloureds) and not classified as White during apartheid.

1.1 Aim

My aim is to investigate Transformation in terms of socio-political structures, collections, displays and the concept of place in two South African museums: the ‘Natal Museum’ and the ‘Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex’ located in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa⁵. My focus is the period 1980-2007 and how the staff-members of the museums experienced Transformation. Against a socio-political and historical backdrop I compare patterns of change both past and present in these museums.

Part of my research will investigate how legal documents, policy documents and political speeches affect and alter heritage production in the museum. I try to grasp negotiations surrounding Transformation and to show how highly dynamic, complex and multifaceted the process is. My research further includes an analysis of the name of the museums, the museum as a place, and its changing role in its urban landscape. This is explored to realise the attitudes that the staff-members had to consider in order to democratise the museums. Furthermore, the collections and displays of the museums are analysed to realise how the museums negotiate Transformation and socio-political structures. Comparing different displays and collections over time reveals how the museums relate to Transformation and change. My discussion thus aims to provide ways of approaching and analysing museum Transformation and general transformation processes.

Throughout this dissertation I have emphasised the ethnographic perspective and located my informants’ perspective at the centre of my research. Qualitative field work data gathered in participant observation and interviews are compared to archival material, e.g., legal documents, policy documents and proposals. Qualitative fieldwork data and archival material are further compared to the theoretical museological discourse in order to investigate discussion and ideals of Transformation.

I recognise that for many people Transformation is a very sensitive and emotive issue. Given the past history it is only natural that those feelings are expressed in museological writing. I suggest, however, that there must be new ways to address museums that go beyond such an

⁵ I have in this dissertation made a deliberate choice to focus on the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. However, it must be noted that I have visited several other museums in KwaZulu-Natal, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Namibia and Mozambique. I have interviewed and talked to staff-members dealing with management, collection, display and educational work.

emotive perspective. It is my hope that my work will contribute to new approaches to Transformation in South African museums.

1.2 Names of events, groups, museums and objects

I have in most cases employed the museums' way of referring to an object, but I often employ an anglophile version of names of groups, objects and places to simplify the reading.⁶ In some cases an Afrikaans word has been used such as 'laager' or 'knopkierie', either because the word is used in an overall South African context, or because the museums use it in their displays. The 'Church of the Vow' is in this text called the 'Church of Vow' because Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex write of it as such and the staff-members call it that. I have favoured the old term 'Anglo-Boer war' over the presently more correct term 'The Second South African war' in order to highlight the conflicts between the Boer and the British. I have made a distinction between 'Transformation' and 'transformation processes'. The concept 'Transformation' is here used as my informants use it, and refers to the period when South African society and its museums were changing from apartheid to democracy. This will be explored further in following chapters.

The 'Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex' has changed its name. It was known until 2007 as the Voortrekker Museum.⁷ The museum has also expanded across several buildings. I have therefore found it necessary to employ one term for the museum to accommodate the reader. The name 'Voortrekker Museum' is important for the experience of the place, since it suggests Afrikaner ownership and socio-political structures in relation to apartheid. The name 'Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex' refers to post-apartheid ideals and structures. I have therefore chosen to call it hereafter the 'Msunduzi Museum'. Periods when the museum was known as the 'Voortrekker Museum' are referred to as 'Msunduzi Museum (VM)'. When referring to reports of the museum, e.g. 'Voortrekker Museum Annual Report', I employ the abbreviation 'VMAR'.

⁶ The use of 'bonnet' for the Afrikaans 'kappie' is one example.

⁷ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

1.2.1 'Cultural group'

South African society is in fact divided into groups: 'African', 'Coloured' 'Indian' and 'White'. These categories are highly contested but are nevertheless real. This is visible, e.g., when applying for a bank account, for employment or for university, when one has to state one's belonging. This is how people refer to each other in daily parlance and how museums address the population in displays. The classification is based on differences in physical features and has become anathema in South Africa because of its association with racism, colonialism and apartheid. The past emphasis on physical differences has changed and at present expresses cultural differences which are celebrated. Within each group there are similarities but also differences. The classification into groups expresses more what they are not than what they are, e.g., Whites are not Indians, Coloureds or Africans. It is only when White, African, Indian and Coloured are compared with each other that they become White, African, Indian and Coloured.

There is at present no overarching term embracing 'African', 'Coloured' 'Indian' and 'White'. My informants refer to these as the 'four cultures' or 'the cultures' (Margareta 2006-10-11), 'the different cultures' (Francis 2006-10-19), 'diverse cultures' (Sabelo 2006-04-21) or 'Coloured communities' (Mpho 2006-10-30). In the media the term 'cultural groups' (*The Witness* 2003-07-31) is in use, and is also found in governmental sources (www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/artscult.html#architecture, www.info.gov.za/speeches/2007/07052416451001.htm); but in the *Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act 19 of 2002* the term 'communities' is used. Clearly there is ambivalence in these terms.

Posel (2001: 89) refers to 'population groups' and holds that racial classification did not start during apartheid. Before the Union of South Africa (1910), she says, there was a division between Whites and 'coloured people' and 'natives'. Bowker and Leigh Star (2002: 197) hold that the *Population Registration Act 1950*⁸ divided the population into 'European' (White), 'Asiatic' (e.g. Chinese and Indian), 'person of mixed race or coloured' (Coloured), and 'natives or pure-blooded individuals of the Bantu race' (African). During apartheid such

⁸ I have in this dissertation referred to acts differently. The *Population Registration Act 1950*, e.g., indicates that I have consulted the act in secondary sources. *Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act 19 of 2002*, e.g., indicates that I have consulted the act as a primary source.

classification functioned as a controlling and dividing mechanism and is at present used for statistical purposes. Today it is a strategy to ensure democratic demography, e.g., when employing or constructing museum displays. The classification of South African society into groups reveals how the museums and my informants experience groups, cultures and classification and use this to navigate the cultural and social environment and to highlight complex social circumstances.

In my efforts to find and define a proper overarching idiom I have discovered that the groups are located in between the concepts of culture, community and cultural identity. Culture, according to Banton (2004: 98-99), includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capability or habit acquired by a person as a member of society. It denotes a way of life and a system of meaning and customs blurred at the edges. A community as defined by Rapport (1996: 114-117) consists of a homogeneity of activities and states of mind among its members. They share a conscious distinctiveness and self-sufficiency, a common interest, locality and system or structure, and function as a specific organisation that distinguishes them from the other and gives them a sense of belonging. Cohen (1985) defines community as a social construct with boundaries that mark one social group from another and provide a symbolic resource to verify identity. Cultural identity as defined by Cashmore (2004: 95-96) is the junction of how a culture defines its subjects and how the subjects imagine themselves; it is a collective 'one true self' which people with a shared history and ancestry have in common. Cultural identity has the ability to unify people and create a stable consistency during periods of struggle.

There is a need to find a generic term for the classification of African, White, Indian and Coloured for the benefit of my reader. I have decided to employ the term 'cultural groups' since it is used by the government and the media, is found in daily parlance, and is close to my informants' definition. 'Culture' in 'cultural groups' does not suggest that each group has one common culture, but I define the term as being located in a fusion of what Banton (2004), Rapport (1996), Cohen (1985) and Cashmore (2004) refer to above. Thus the term is here used to dissimilate how groups orientate the socio-political landscape to define themselves and others. This is critical for the understanding of social change as Transformation.

CHAPTER 2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Museum studies is an eclectic discipline that allows the researcher to borrow from a multitude of theories. The approach in this dissertation is based on anthropological qualitative methods. I centre on ethnographic material and therefore emphasise the anthropological fieldwork and complement it with contemporary critical theories. My three key analytical concepts are time space, and place. New museology, firmly located in post-structuralism and post-colonialism, is a primary theory in my research and allows multiple voices to explain the complexity of Transformation. I have employed post-structuralist and post-colonialist methods to approach the field and to describe and visualise past and present inequalities, since Transformation intended dissociation from apartheid and sought to change inequality to a multicultural equality. Other theories, however, have been employed to explain the complexities of museum structures.

2.1 The field

This dissertation is based on qualitative anthropological methodology using participant observation as the field of investigation. The field has been demarcated to the museum, as in anthropological studies of communities. The museum – the field – is part of a larger social system and is closely connected to place, space and time. The museum is a cluster of relations connected to structures within and outside its confines. This is related to the actions of the agents – the museum staff-members – and my study deals with how they perceive and negotiate Transformation, and not with the visitor's perception of the museum. My fieldwork was carried out in the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum from 2004-2007. I participated in the daily routine of staff-members, their work with displays, collections, pedagogical work, focus group meetings and fieldwork. Such anthropological studies are scarce within the field of museum studies, but can be found in Bouquet (2001). In order to understand the complex reality of Transformation in South African museums I stress the need for empirical anthropological research.

Qualitative methodology is an important tool in the process of understanding the complexity and context of the field. It was adopted first by Malinowski (1961) and is used to understand how informants organise and perceive the world (Goetz & LeCompte 1984, Denzinger &

Lincoln 2000: 10, Miller, Dingwell & Murphy 2004: 32). Participant observation is an open-ended process of inquiry involving in-depth case study (Jorgensen 1989), where the researcher does not wish to have questions answered but rather seeks to uncover cultural patterns (Dobbert 1982: 114). My dissertation aims to understand how my informants relate to political climates by comparing their statements to archival documentary information. Analysing documents can help uncover thoughts and strategies and can reveal how the agents relate to Transformation. My informants have been selected because they work with displays, collections and overall management in the two museums. My focus is on those informants I found observant, reflective and articulate and I follow Gilchrist's (1992: 77) view that it is best to have a close relationship with a few informants. Qualitative interviews have been carried out with the help of audiotapes and written notes, since some of my informants were not comfortable with being recorded. All my informants' names have been coded using a made-up first name. The choices of name indicate gender and cultural affiliation, important for the understanding of the museums. The curator of displays, collector's names and informant's position in the museums are not stated to ensure their anonymity.

A great part of cultural heritage consists of documents that preserve the intellectual memory of society and mankind. Documents embody individual and societal actions, interactions and encounters (Atkinson & Coffey 2004: 57). Thus I analyse the records of the two museums as to their daily work, their relation to society and government, their proposals, letters, minutes and reports. Atkinson and Coffey (2004: 59) hold that documents are social constructions that are produced, shared, socially organised, used and exchanged as part of a social interactional order. Recognising this has enabled me to understand the values involved and has given me an idea of the two museums' self-perception. Proposals have given me important insight into latent ideas, ideologies and planning underlying displays and collection programmes. Annual Reports, the museums' communication with the government, give an idea of the yearly product and outline activities that the museums considered important. The Natal Museum Annual Report (NMAR) is an older and more detailed report than the Msunduzi Museum Annual Reports (VMAR) and has played an important part in my research into both institutions.

The Msunduzi Museum has kept a comprehensive archive of letters and documents from the late 1980s to the present, but some of the Natal Museum's correspondence has been lost. At present there is a debate in South Africa about the destruction of material evidence from the

apartheid era. What role this has played in ongoing research must remain speculation. Photo documentation is important to recollect old displays and trace changes. The Natal Museum has kept a good photographic archive of their displays, while there are almost no photographic documents of the Msunduzi Museum. The Natal Museum's activities have also been documented in the local press, which gives a broader understanding in general of the Natal Museum than of the Msunduzi Museum.

2.2 Time and the structuration theory

Time is a keyword in this dissertation. Following Pred (1986: 195), I hold that a timeline must be constructed to reveal the changing, recurring and multiple patterns of Transformation. I have tried to demarcate a museum timeline that runs from the first established museum in South Africa (1825) to the present (2007), with the focus on 1980-2007. The line has been divided into sections corresponding to socio-political transformation processes and has thus enabled me to position and analyse Transformation in depth and in a broad perspective. Moreover, I have used the timeline to compare identified changes in the museums by referring to places, collections and displays. To understand and deepen my analysis of Transformation, I have invoked a broader temporal perspective than is usual.

Time refers to how groups negotiate and create times. Time, according to Munn (1992: 93), is a theoretical examination of a basic socio-cultural process in which temporality is constructed. Munn (1986: 11-13, 1992: 104) and Giddens (1984: 133) suggest that agents are not merely 'in' time and space, but create that time and space by following time-space paths. Agents are active participants who negotiate and renegotiate and create time in the form of relations between themselves and temporal reference points that are also spatial. Spatial reference points involve visual characters and production sequences, a symbolic process which is called 'temporalization' by Fabian (1983: 74). Each group in society understands, constructs and acts 'in' time differently, meaning that they create and construct Transformation differently, as I shall show by analysing the material production of the museums.

Time is essential in the transformation processes, and Giddens (1979) merges structural theory (theory of action) with interactional theory (theory of meaning) in its analysis. Structuration theory has been employed to analyse time and the structures of transformation processes to investigate how agents act 'in' time and how time is materialised in museums.

Giddens (1979: 61-66, 1981: 26-29, 53, 1984: 37, 1990: 302, 1991: 204), explains that change in society is space-time paths known as structures and that structures are resources that are rules of transformation. These are organised as properties in social systems and are fundamental to social change. In structuration theory human agency and structures presuppose each other and agents therefore have the capacity to transform the structure that gave them capacity to act; a structure is thus a process, it is not static, but exists in time and space in a state as imagined by agents.

With the help of Giddens (1979: 96, 1981: 26-30, 1984: 377, 1990: 302), I try to understand the regularities and change of social systems that are historically conditioned and operate according to time. With the help of the structuration theory and my ethnographic material, I create a timeline of museum time to facilitate an understanding of Transformation, patterns of changes, and my informants' lived experience of Transformation. The timeline is a 'time-reckoning' which Munn (1992: 103) described as a way to visualise time and recognise cultural categories. I have organised my chapters accordingly and attempt to analyse my ethnographic material in a corresponding way.

This dissertation visualises how structures are created and acted on 'in' time and how the result materialises in collections and displays. This approach creates a reference-point that enables me to locate materialisations 'in' time. Munn (1992: 109) holds that control over time is not just a strategy of interaction, but is also a medium of hierarchical power and governance. Giddens (1979: 104, 1984: 15) opines that transformation is a process of making difference and that each transformation changes the content of the material. Transformation is about power and Giddens (1979: 2, 104, 202, 1984: 14-15) suggests that structures cannot be understood unless the existing power-relations are identified. I hold that Transformation is an execution of power 'in' time, making time and material culture appear differently. Transformation in museums can only be understood according to the recurring, new aspects of change, cross-referenced within a broader theoretical and social-political temporal framework.

Time is a tool to locate structures and enables me to compare how the museum materialises socio-political change within itself as a place and in displays and collections. I suggest that qualitative interviews can add to Giddens' (1979: 104, 1990: 303, 313) argument on transformation, since they involve the exercise of human agency. Agents are reflexive to

structures and never subordinate to them. There are discrepancies between structures and agents which cannot always be expressed except in anthropological field-work and close-contact interviews. I suggest that Transformation can only be understood through how agents react to structures and create time.

South Africa was – and still is – racially divided and this has created different times which people are ‘in’. Each ‘cultural group’ has founded their own understanding of time in relation to the socio-political structures of society. When groups merge there is an emphasis on creating a unified time or at least a unified narrative of time. This has brought about ‘time-pockets’ and ‘in-between spaces’. This is time and space in which there is no dominant narrative, or where many different narratives exist in conflict. Transformation is characterised by this – different narratives and understandings of time striving to find one voice within a socio-political environment. Multiple versions of time can be experienced as a cacophony of voices, and may be chaotic, but are crucial to the understanding of Transformation.

Using the timeline of museums allows me to deconstruct some of the assumptions that post-colonial and post-structuralist writers have applied to Transformation. The advocates of Transformation emphasise an active departure from colonial and apartheid times, juxtaposing the past against Transformation ideals. To avoid moralisation and to put Transformation in perspective, it is important to investigate the concept in a long temporal sequence, for as Giddens (1979: 202) explains, any patterns of social interaction are situated in time and only form a pattern when examined over time. So the long timeline in this thesis and the richness of my ethnographic material are deliberate, since the pattern tends to repeat itself when studying cultural propaganda and ideals.

2.3 Post-structuralism, space, place and new museology

Rorty (1989) suggests that post-structuralism has focused mainly on deconstructing theories rather than on creating its own. During the past decade, however, post-structuralism has become an important theory for South African museologists and has enabled them to deconstruct museum activities. The fact that modern racial segregation in South Africa started when industrialism and modernism were initiated (Beinart & Dubow 1995: 1), has created a political position for post-structuralism. Post-structuralism therefore serves as an academic rejection of racism and, just like post-colonialism, becomes a political statement. It allows the

researcher to break down hierarchies of gender and ethnicity and to challenge racial segregation. Both theories are therefore important in relation to South African museological writing.

Brown (1990), Sarup (1988), Wilmot (1992) and Kellner (1988) argue that theoretical truths are not fixed units and that post-structuralism brings forward multiple explanations. So the norm in my research is to advance multiple explanations and recognise that agents actively construct meanings. I admit misgivings with post-structuralism and agree with Alvesson and Sköldbberg (1994: 260-261) that post-structuralism has a weak empirical association. I suggest that a deep understanding of the ethnographic material in my research enables me to bring forward multiple explanations. I have therefore used post-structuralism to complement my anthropological fieldwork.

Post-structuralism sometimes positions itself ironically to the material (as represented by Dubin 2006) and tends to find the answers that its adherents assume to find (Graff 1979). Studies of South African museums often assume to find segregation and racism in the colonial and apartheid museums. I suggest however that there is a multiple explanation, and I have emphasised my ethnographic material to avoid obvious answers found by assumptions. Post-structuralism sometimes sees the world in fragments and although my research uses Derrida's (1967a, b, c) term 'deconstruction', I argue for a more constructive and holistic approach to my ethnographic material. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of perception* (2004) is used as an approach to analyse material culture and widen the analysis of agents' understanding of the world. Phenomenological understanding is supplied by a post-structural approach and placed in a time and space continuum. I suggest that the material culture components identify an activity, understood as a structure, and that this must be related to time and space; I therefore study artefacts, documents and displays as references to political times and spaces.

The concepts of place, space and time as sprung from post-structuralism, phenomenology and structuration theory are approaches in which my ethnographic material is analysed. This approach challenges previous writings on museums and brings forward a new dimension of the museums. Place in this dissertation is demarcated to the museums, it becomes the field of investigation, it is physical place given meaning. Therefore I cannot stress enough the importance that my ethnographic fieldwork has played in this process. Place is a physical location inhabited and given meaning. It is the building, the inner and outer architecture, the

area that agents have isolated as the museum. To Cresswell (2004), Lefebvre (1991) and Urry (1995) place is in this sense less abstract than space that is produced and consumed.

The museums I study are located in the urban landscape, which in this work is the same as what Rapoport (1994) calls the 'built environment'. The built environment is 'the physical expression of the organization of space – spatial organization made visible' (Rapoport 1994: 470). Cosgrove (1985) and Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) have explained the historical-hermeneutic understanding of the complex symbolic⁹ representation made through landscape. Cosgrove (1985) and Bender (1998, 1993) hold that there are many ways of seeing the landscape and a relationship between place and social formations. Bender (1998: 25) suggests that there is never *a landscape*, but many landscapes created by people. Places manifest a sense of identity appropriating and contesting the sedimented past that makes up the landscape. Bender's argument is essential for my understanding of the museum in the urban landscape. The museum is linked to experience of the urban landscape, a concept important when discussing the museum during the colonial and apartheid periods. To complement this discussion I have supplied museological discussions (Roberts 2004, Cameron 2004, Harrison 2005, Duncan & Wallach 2003, Yanni 1999, Sheets-Peyson 1998) of the meaning of architecture and museum as a cathedral, a temple or a forum.

The concept of place is about how we make the world meaningful and experience the world (Tilley 1993, 1994); it is also at the centre of my research. Phenomenologists like Relph (1976) and post-structuralists like Harvey (1989) and Massey (1991, 1994, 2005) have allowed elaboration on the relationship between place and agents. Their arguments are bound up with the reproduction of power that contributes to the meaning of place. The place provides a sense of belonging for those who use it (Darby 2000: 9) – an understanding fundamental to the discussion of Transformation in museums and the perception of place. Sacks (1986: 2) and Dodgshon (1987: 67) have shown that place is bound up with how people use land, with the perception of self and other, with rights and access especially in regard to social change. This is especially visible in discussion of the museums and racial zoning.

Place and space have very similar expressions; Shields (1991) makes no distinction between the two, an approach that I cannot fully commend. For me place is a physical location in the

⁹ Symbols are here defined as systems of meaning; they are a central point of orientation that other things depend on (Spencer 2000: 353-359).

landscape; space is socio-political structure, perception and meaning visualised in tangible expression. Space can become spatial when socio-political structures and meaning are applied to the place. Cresswell (2004: 11-12), Giddens (1979: 102-113), Darby (2000: 15), Pred (1986: 11) and Malpas (1999) argue that space is linked not only to concepts of power in relation to power and knowledge but also to spatial and temporal ordering. This is crucial for understanding museum Transformation. Spatialisation is to me similar to what Pred (1984: 280, 291-292, 1986: 19-22) denotes with the 'becoming' of place; he holds that place is the dialectic between social and economic structures and that place and power 'become' each other.¹⁰ Transformation, therefore, using Pred's (1986: 22) terms, is inseparable from the 'becoming' of place.

Space is political (Cresswell 2004: 8) and politics is structures situated in time. This is visible in collections that are material archives that compress space and time and the museums' way of performing 'time-reckoning'. Space is a materialisation of structures unfolding in time. Space materialises in the place (museum) in the form of displays that manifest power and ideology. Both place and space are invested with meaning and power. Power must be related and understood vis-à-vis agents which produce and reproduce social life and create and act 'in' time. Place and space therefore cannot exist without human agency, and ethnographic fieldwork in the museums becomes crucial for understanding the concepts of place and space.

Displays and collections are visual ethnographic material, and new museology is used to analyse visual material. A new museum theory emerged with Vergo's anthology *New Museology* (1989) that called for a critical approach to representations in museums. The theory argues that all representations are political and aims to deconstruct, re-read and re-examine museum activities, collections and displays. In the last decade post-colonial theory has been the norm in South African museological writing. White academics have analysed and criticised the museum structures existing during colonial and apartheid times and lately African, Coloured and Indian groups have joined the debate. Post-colonial theory among academics in South Africa amounts above all to a reaction and a need to position themselves against colonial and apartheid times. Post-colonial museological writing in South Africa can be regarded as an academic contribution to the nation-building agenda. Important in this context is the discussion of the other in new museology and the relationship between the

¹⁰Compare also Harvey 1996:316, Bender 1993.

coloniser and the colonised represented through Bal (1996a), Davison (1998), Bennett (1996), Karp and Lavine (1991), Kaplan (1994) and Karp, Mullen-Kramer and Lavine (1992). Although Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1992) want to erode it, the binary opposition between coloniser and colonised remains the basis of new museology's use of post-colonial theory. I suggest that as much as post-colonialism tries to break with colonialism, the theory continues to build on its epistemology. Post-colonialism will always depend on the coloniser to state its position in the world.

For Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989: 2), post-colonialism covers all the cultures affected by imperial forces from the moment of colonisation to the present day. Post-colonialism in this explanation is not fixed in space and time; therefore I have misgivings about it. I suggest that the ethnographic material must be investigated and located in space and time and that the temporal shift must be recognised. Recognising time and space aspects means allowing multiple explanations of the museums. In this research museological post-colonial writing is used as a method to approach inequalities and as a way to discuss and deconstruct the values on which the museum rested. Related to this discussion is the black consciousness movement (BCM) writer Biko (2004), who is here used to exemplify the self-perception of Africans in relation to Whites. From BCM sprang the African Renaissance, a political philosophy exemplified here by writers such as Maphalala (2000), Ngubane (2000), Mbeki (1999), Diop (1999) and Ntsoane (2002). African Renaissance is in essence post-colonial in the sense that it tries to recover and re-evaluate indigenous African epistemologies and an African self-worth. Through this writing one can also note a post-colonial identity crisis bound up in the relation between the colonial past and the search for a stable identity; these are concepts essential for the understanding of museums.

Theories like post-colonialism and post-structuralism help to deconstruct both the concept of typology in collections and displays (Preziosi & Fargo 2003, Shelton 2001), and the use of evolutionary hierarchies and the concept of the 'primitive' in relation to western culture in matters of race, ethnicity and gender (Davison 1998, Ferguson 1996, Lionnet 2004, Durrans 1988). A post-structural approach helps the researcher in museum theory to deconstruct the male/female and domination/submission in displays and collections (Porter 1988, Aronsson & Meurling (eds) 2005). This is especially important in South African museums where a male heteronormative perspective prevails. New museology calls for re-classification of groups, objects, displays and events and for an emphasis on reallocation of anthropological artefacts

as art (Ames 2004, Bouquet 2001, Leeb du Toit 2005). New museology calls for dialogue with the community it represents and for a museum willing to share power and give control over heritage.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992) has investigated a collection epistemology and shows that collections were used as representations of a society's superiority. Pearce (1989, 1990, 1992, 1995) is knowledgeable when relating a museum collection to its society, research trends, collectors, donors and the relationship between these aspects. Clifford (1999), Attfield (2000) and Knell (2004), to mention some, have elaborated on this and expand on classification and representation. The meaning of agents to material culture, and how they relate to social praxis and its multivocality, is essential to my dissertation. I therefore draw on museologists and sociologists such as Kavanagh (1989), Kopitof (1986) and Bourdieu (1977) to explore these issues. South African museums are striving to become what Hooper-Greenhill (2001) describes as a 'postmuseum', an institution that focuses on memory and healing and clearly articulates its agenda, strategies and decisions and continually re-evaluates them. This kind of museum is trying to find sensitive ways to treat non-western objects in its collection and displays (Marstine 2006: 19, 29-30).

2.4 Previous research

In the past decade interest in South African museum studies has expanded, but little has been communicated. It would facilitate national and international research if the local universities would disseminate their museum research on all levels. Present circumstances make it difficult to produce up-to-date details in South African museum studies, since most of the accessible material originates from the 1980s and 1990s. There are many interesting aspects of museums in South Africa waiting to be addressed, since most of the known work is confined to Cape Town and the field of art history.

The South African Museum Association Bulletin (SAMAB) is one of the more important journals used in this work to detect trends of Transformation in South African museums. *SAMAB* is an interesting document of the museum sector's self-perception, political perspective and changes. When South African museologists write on Transformation, they are creating, exploring, negotiating and shaping its outcome in museums. Therefore their texts must be regarded as documents of Transformation.

The majority of articles on Transformation in *SAMAB* were written by Whites up to 1994 and formed the White perception of the museum¹¹. Although freedom of speech was limited at the time, it seems to me that the articles produced from 1987-1992 were more radical in their view of the museum and its role in society. The articles produced from 1994-2007 were more in line with the political climate of the day and were less radical. While conceding how difficult it is to divide things into phases, I nevertheless suggest that the articles in *SAMAB* represent an early radical phase from 1987-1992¹², a middle preparatory phase from 1992-2000, a politically appropriate phase from 2000-2004 and a present phase of consolidating Transformation. The absence of articles criticising the museums before 1987 must be ascribed to the socio-political climate and the censorship imposed by the state during the 1970s-1980s. White authors during 1980-1990 write in opposition to colonialism and apartheid. African, Coloured and Indian researchers later add their voices, writing from a post-colonial, BCM and African Renaissance perspective although by this time apartheid had already fallen.

Among the more important research endeavours in *SAMAB* is natural scientist Brian Stuckenberg's (1987) ground-breaking museological article, 'Stating the case: A synoptic view of the position of museums and the problems they face in the changing and divided society of contemporary South Africa'. In the same issue of *SAMAB* one finds archaeologist and historian Aron Mazel and John Wright's (1987) 'Bastions of Ideology: The depiction of pre-colonial history in the museums of Natal and Kwazulu' – and later the same authors' 'Controlling the past in the Museums of Natal and Kwazulu' (1991). I should also mention Aron Mazel and Gaby Ritchie (1994) – 'Museums and their messages: The display of the pre and early colonial past in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe'. These authors analyse and criticise the historical and archaeological displays in Kwazulu and Natal museums – and Ann Wanless 'The thousand arrows the museum is heir to: Transforming collections in museums' (2001). I further mention Noel Solani and Khwezi Ka Mpumlwana: 'Memory, identity and representation: Possibilities of new models of representation in a transforming environment' (2001), and Janet Hall's (1999) article 'Museums, myths and missionaries: Redressing the past for a new South Africa', which is an overview of Transformation in South African museums.

¹¹ This can be detected from the names and the fact that Africans, Indians and Coloureds seldom or never were employed in the museum.

¹² I would like to point out that the political environment when apartheid was in its very last phase opened up for radical discussions like this, something that was not possible before.

When the first democratic elections were held in South Africa, articles were published by writers such as Denver A Webb 'Winds of change', Brian Wilmot 'Museum Momasan', Bryan Krafchik 'Adventurous changes', Gene Adams 'Cape Town postcard', Udo Küsel 'No building, No problem', Patricia Davison 'A place apart', Graham Dominy 'Amandla!', and Estelle Liebenberg and Juliette Leeb du Toit 'Objects and contexts'. All these writers were at the time closely connected with museums and were thus critically appraising their own milieu while giving their views and critically investigating Transformation. The writers were also critically assessing the work and contributions of their own colleagues. One should remember these facts when reading *SAMAB* because it gives one's text a deeper understanding and dimension when evaluating writers who enjoyed the benefit of the apartheid system.

There are more texts dealing with the Natal Museum than with the Msunduzi Museum. The first exhibition of apartheid paraphernalia in South Africa was at the Natal Museum, and the institution's contribution to Transformation is discussed by historian Graham Dominy (2004). Other articles dealing with the Natal Museum include environmental historian Shirley Brooks' post-colonial articles: 'The Natal Society Museum (1851-1904). Potentials and problems' (1988) and 'Encounters with the colonial: Dr Ernest Warren, science and new representations of nature of the Natal Museum 1903-1913' (2005). Art historian Juliette Leeb du Toit's article 'Genus och identitet i sydafrikanska museer' (2005) discusses displays and museum activities from a feminist and post-colonial perspective. Historian Bill Guest's *A century of science and service. The Natal Museum in a changing South Africa 1904-2004* (2006) is a presentation of the history of the Natal Museum from its earliest days to the present.

The American museologist Steven C Dubin (2006) recently published a book on Transformation in South African museums. His discussion is based on the polarisation between Whites and blacks. He has grasped the overall themes of Transformation, but has not familiarised himself with the complex cultural-political context needed for a deep understanding of the museum structures and the cultural situation in South Africa. I found it difficult to use his book in my own work, despite his field of interest, because he juxtaposed different kinds of museum without analysing their specific characteristics. Nevertheless since he discussed the Natal Museum and Msunduzi Museum (VM), I found it worthwhile to incorporate his research.

Museologist and archaeologist Patricia Davison discusses Transformation in South African museums in her PhD thesis (1991) *Material culture, context and meaning. A critical investigation of museum practice, with particular reference to the South African Museum*. She covers the same theme in her articles 'Museums and the reshaping of memory' (1998) and 'Ways of seeing African art' (1987). Her work on 'Art as Artefact another way of seeing' (1990) discusses material culture from an archaeological and art historical perspective. A new-generation museologist with an African approach is Mxolisi Chrisostomas Dlamuka: 'The changing representation of history museums: A case study of the Voortrekker museum' (2000). The same author writes on *Identities, Memories, Histories and Representation: The role of museums in twentieth century KwaZulu-Natal* (2003). Sydwell Nsizwa Dlamini, (2001b) discusses 'Patterns and shifts in cultural heritage in Kwazulu-Natal: Selected case studies 1977-1999'. Although these authors represent a new generation, their discussions are very close to the established research environment.

Other researchers dealing with Transformation include Julie L McGee, who recently published 'Restructuring South African Museums: Reality and Rhetoric within Cape Town' (2006), and Katherine Goodnow who wrote 'Challenge and transformation: Museums in Cape Town and Sydney' (2006). McGee argues from an art historical perspective, focusing on interpretation of artefacts and art, and Goodnow uses an administrative point of view. JM Gore, 'A lack of nation. The evolution of history in South African museums C 1825-1945' (2004) investigates the development of South African museums. Museologist Ciraj Rassool – 'The rise of heritage and the reconstitution of history in South Africa' (2000); Leslie Witz, Ciraj Rassool & Gary Minkley (2000) 'Sydafrika och historien. Om gestaltning av det förflutna under 1900-talet'; and Khwezi ka Mpumlwana, Gerhard Corsane, Juanita Pastor-Makhurane and Ciraj Rassool (2002) 'Inclusion and the power of representation: South African museum and the cultural politics of social transformation' – discuss Transformation from a post-colonial and African Renaissance perspective. Other work needing to be mentioned is *Desire Lines. Space. Memory and Identities in the post-apartheid city* (2007), edited by Nick Shepherd and Noeleen Murray. *Museum Frictions. Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by Ivan Karp, Corinne A Krantz, Lynn Szwaja and Thomás Ybarra-Frausto, which contains articles on South African museums. Caroline Hamilton and Elisabeth Rankin's (1999) article: 'Revision, Reaction, Re-vision: The roles of Museums in (a) Transforming South Africa' also gives good insight into the process of Transformation, as

does Annie Coombes' book: *History after Apartheid: Visual culture and public memory in a democratic South Africa* (2003). All the above-mentioned researchers attempt to cope with the past by putting things right, by reconstructing and renegotiating history.

Gerard Corsane (2004) – 'Transforming Museums and Heritage in Postcolonial and Post-apartheid South Africa: The Impact of Processes of Policy Formulation and New Legislation' - is one of the better studies of the administrative changes in Transformation. Previous articles addressing constitutional changes are André Odendaal, 'Working document: Comment on MUSA intersectional investigation for national policy' (1994b) and 'The challenges of transformation for South African Museums' (1995a); and JC Pauw (1995) 'Museums for South Africa'. Other studies dealing with structural and constitutional changes are legal practitioner's JP van der Vyver (2003) 'Cultural identity as a constitutional right in South Africa' and Laurens du Plessis' (2002) 'Legal and constitutional means designated to facilitate the integration of diverse cultures in South Africa: A provincial assessment'. Also relating the museums to the constitution and changes are HMJ du Preez (2004) 'Museums in a constitutional state: A case study' and Rochelle Keene and Ann Wanless (2002) 'Transformation: Lifting the veil'. In my dissertation, literature debating the museological development is used both as reference material and as valuable ethnographical material that speaks about the museum sector's perception of Transformation. My research therefore represents both the self-reflections of the museum community and the current state of the discipline.

CHAPTER 3. A POLITICAL BACKDROP TO TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUMS

Transformation is a difficult concept to explain and deploy. According to the Oxford English Dictionary transformation is an act of changing in form, shape and appearance – a metamorphosis (Simpson & Weiner 1989: 400). This explanation, however, does not embrace the meaning associated with Transformation in South African society and museums, where the concept Transformation has a much more extended and multiple association than in the above explanation. It refers explicitly to a change from White domination to a multicultural South Africa, and includes ideas associated with reconciliation, restructuring, development and nation-building. Transformation is about a national vision; it is a shift from a divided and socio-economically imbalanced society to a democracy. It is associated with a shift in power from the powerful to the powerless. In this text I use the concept of Transformation as my informants use it and as it is commonly used in South Africa.

My research has shown that in distinguishing Transformation from previous periods, Transformation has been treated as an event, a paradigm shift, something new and different. Ideas, dates (e.g. 1994) and socio-political structures have been addressed as events that changed society. The concept of event is a social construct that punctures temporality. By dividing time into events, the transformation processes are rendered more clearly; but Transformation cannot be regarded as an event: it must be placed in a larger context of temporality. According to Sewell (2005: 125-126, 151, 189, 269), the problem with addressing transformations is that no social theory has been developed to deal with problems of social change and the issue has therefore been treated in terms of structures. Since structures have been used by social scientists to address society as a whole, the implication is that structures are stable. Structures are dynamic, however, and using structures in relation to change tends to involve awkward epistemological shifts, but remains the best way there is at present to explain the concept of transformation processes.

Change involves a shift in economic, social, political and cultural resources and the emergence of refined models of power. In South Africa this has, at present, been given a positive connotation, because it assumes moving from the inequality of apartheid to

democracy. The concept of Transformation has replaced the word revolution, a word that stands for a more violent change than reconciliation associated with Transformation. I do not agree with the treatment of Transformation as an event. In line with Sewell (2005: 250), I hold that an event is an act of 'collective creativity' which refers to more dynamic and multiple factors contributing to change. Sewell (2005: 245-251) explicitly argues that at times when ordinary routines and social life are open to doubt, e.g., when societies are in transformation, new possibilities are thinkable, possible to elaborate, and can be applied to new circumstances of power and extended to new social contexts.

South African society, including museums, has treated Transformation as a demarcated event that has changed society completely. Consequently Transformation is treated as equivalent to institutionalised change. It is much more complex and moves along many temporal epistemological and discursive fields such as BCM, colonialism, apartheid and the African Renaissance, constructed through 'singularised' events that are emotionally experienced. Transformation, in my view, embraces past and present, time and agents, coinciding in spatial and temporal discourses that define the stakes of the present. Transformation is difficult to define, as I have mentioned, because it merges South African history, relations to Europe, race and politics and is part of the shaping of a democratic South Africa.

3.1 Transformation in museums

At the opening of the Robben Island Museum in 1997 Nelson Mandela said that during apartheid, museums in South Africa reflected the political ideals of a minority and the exclusion of others (Mandela 1997: 3). Mandela expressed what Stuckenberg (1987)¹³ had said earlier; that museums in South Africa were essentially eurocentric. There is no doubt that eurocentrism is important in the understanding of Transformation, but I would like to stress that it is also a 'lazy signifier' that needs to be contextualised. In a South African museological context the concept has a negative connotation because it associates museums with what Shohat and Stam (1994: 2, 57, 100) and Serequeberhan (2002: 64) describe as the oppressive colonial conquest, the imaginary superiority of European heritage that systematically degraded Africans as incomplete beings, positioning them into arbitrary European hierarchal classification systems. Since colonialism introduced eurocentrism to

¹³ See also Dominy (1992), Wilmot (1987), Hofmeyer (1987), Wright and Mazel (1987), Odendaal (1995), Owen and Holleman (1989), Keene and Wanless (2002), Dlamuka and Ndlovu (2002), Wakashe (2001), Abungu (2004), Dlamuka (2003) and Hall (1999). All are contemporary discussions.

South Africa, museums could at worst be regarded as armed ethnocentrism in institutionalised form. As I discuss later, eurocentrism normalised colonial values and made them invisible and undisputed. Eurocentrism has to be deconstructed so that different themes hidden in the overall concept can be exposed. Europe is and was a vastly diverse cultural continent as were the people that lived eurocentrism in South Africa.

Transformation is an attempt to rid the museum of eurocentrism. Given that eurocentrism is multifaced and has different expressions, the critique of eurocentric museums is a political construct. It is based on a critique against White South African heritage that was incorporated into the apartheid agenda with the aim of unifying Whites against blacks. The concept of eurocentrism cannot be separated from Transformation because it shapes part of its discourse, e.g., the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum had two very different expressions of eurocentrism, which must be addressed when analysing Transformation. The concept of eurocentrism in South African museological writings, especially during the 1980s, was used as a discursive rhetorical tool to express an apologetic reaction, because it was seen as equal to racism. After 1994, eurocentrism became an instrument to find new discursive identities in a transforming museum sector. Eurocentrism was articulated as that which the museum sector did not want to be, and was juxtaposed to disclose values that could be identified as South African. This was an effort to find new models on which the museum structure might find a transformed shape.

In his speech at Robben Island Mandela (1997) clarified what museums should move away from and change into. Transformation in museums means change – a change of museums and change of values. For my informant Gert (2006-04-28), it meant having an institution that reflected the changes in broader society. Transformation objectives do not only include museums, but entail a process of changing society at large that started around the 1990s to make South Africa inclusive and democratic. Transformation of the socio-political, economic and cultural sectors in South Africa can be defined as a moral struggle against racial divisions (Johnson-Hill 1998: 2); the termination of conflict between dominant groups and subservient groups (Mbeki 1998: 43); and the reconstruction of society and alienation of marginalising (Makgoba 1997: 182). Furthermore, it is a movement away from elitist control (Togni 1996: 109) and is ridding South Africa of the apartheid system and fundamentally changing its social landscape (Tondi 2005: 135).

The writers referenced above argue that Transformation is a fundamental break with colonial and apartheid values, structures and ideologies. They express a political attempt of social and cultural political discourse that aspires to break with the past and be different. In this sense the break has furthered the interpretation of Transformation as an event. Museum Transformation is dependent on the fundamental restructuring of society at large which works on multiple levels. It will take time for the museums to find new forms because the larger social context has not yet resituated itself in its new framework. Transformation is at present still in the making. It constitutes cultural change, but culture continues to be a weapon as used during apartheid and it is still an integral political platform where the government and other actors reshape social life. The danger of using culture as a weapon was pointed out by Sachs (1991) as long as a decade ago, who argued for its annihilation.

Museum Transformation is associated with other reconstructive guidelines for society, all of which have in common the attempt to rid museums and cultural political discourse of eurocentrism. Mathers (2000: 46) and Dondolo (2005: 68) suggest that Transformation has been proposed as a complete reconstruction of the museum sector, an argument that this thesis deconstructs and refines. Transformation advances more ideological factors as presented by Mathers (2000: 46), Ngubane (1996) and Dubin (2006: 5-6), who argue for principles of justice, democracy, non-racism, non-sexism, inclusion, assimilation, participation, collaboration and eradication. Transformation for these writers is a way of addressing what Ngubane (1996: 2) regarded as the maldistribution of culture during the apartheid era amid the absence of freedom of expression and critical thought. These explanations follow general restructuring guidelines and are somewhat broad and formless for adoption in a museological context.

Transformation is about changing who has the right to work in cultural institutions and who has the right to represent and be represented. These rights were strictly reserved for Whites. Dlamuka and Ndlovu (2002: 46), Corsane (2004: 7), Layne (2004: 19), Grootboom (2004: 43-44), Dubin (2006: 5-6), Keene and Wanless (2002: 43), Dondolo (2005: 68), Mosala (2003: 2), Mpumlwana, Corsane, Makhurane and Rassool (2002: 246) regard Transformation as a community-centred approach where the community members act as specialists in museums. The community-centre approach is a reaction and an attempt to void the previous representations made by White academics and to reclaim the right to represent the self in the museums. This approach has in some cases actualised itself in the museums, but also requires

a self-reflective community active in the creation of heritage. This view of Transformation deals with ownership of the museums and my informant Mpho (2006-10-30) argued that the most important factor in Transformation was to see all 'cultural groups' use the museum. What he suggested was a democratisation of the museum as a place and an attempt to break the previously segregated heritage environment. I shall elaborate these points later.

Corsane (2004: 7) holds that Transformation is broadening the understanding of what heritage constitutes and understanding that heritage resources need to be managed in an integrated way. Others argue that it is about transforming collection policies, exhibition policies and audiences (Dubin 2006: 5-6, Keene & Wanless 2002: 43). The ideological approach to Transformation is applied by these writers in a structural manner, but they give no practical suggestion as to how the museums should achieve their goals.

The Natal Museum was the only one that defined what Transformation was to them: 'Transformation in itself is not an objective, but describes a process and the manner in which an organisation sets its objectives and goals and strives towards them' (Natal Museum 2002). The museum shows a different understanding of Transformation and a realisation that Transformation implies ideological objectives that the museum must react to and implement. The museum also indicated that there was not one but multiple definitions of Transformation with one real agenda: to be different from before and different from apartheid in particular. My informant Bill (2006-04-18) regarded Transformation as hidden in a welter of political and social confusion that the governing people did not seem to be able to separate. Transformation includes all aspects of changing the perception of society, its culture and institutions and it is not merely about changing displays and collections. The same demands are placed on reconstructing society as are placed on transforming museums. Transformation is in the making and is the negotiation of legal and structural changes.

3.2. Cultural, historical and political background to Transformation

Since its advocates want Transformation to be regarded as being different from the past, it is naturally shaped by a post-colonial critique of society. Post-colonialism is used as one of the primary rhetorical tools for creating a South African discourse aimed at replacing eurocentrism and finding new ways of approaching past and present. New museology is another, focusing on a critique of the Victorian and colonial periods. Post-colonialism and

new museology have been used by White, African, Coloured and Indian writers to argue against apartheid subjugation, as in Witz, Rassool and Minkley (2000), Mpumlwana et al (2002), Dlamini (2001a) and Dlamuka (2003).

Post-colonial critique is an analytical tool for investigating a South African discourse and discerning what the museum wants to become. I argue that the colonial and Victorian eras serve as indicators of when the inequality began in South Africa that has come to shape heritage identities in the country of today. No matter race, creed or gender these identities are relied on to emphasise cultural distinctiveness. Post-colonial critique is a way for South Africans to come to terms with themselves and their heritage. The colonial period is therefore a platform from which the concepts of race, class, identity and gender can be addressed, a safe haven remote from the present. Transformation does not only reveal how to renegotiate racial aspects, but proposes a method and theory to deal with the present through identification with the past. This shows how complex and far the issues of Transformation are from a simple polarisation of self and other.

Pallo Jordan, Minister of Arts and Culture, articulated this in a speech in 2007:

One might say that the term ‘culture’ and cultural issues have historically been among the most abused in the policy making of this country. This was especially so during the days of colonial and apartheid rule. We should always bear that abuse in mind when debating cultural practices. We should never lose sight of the manner in which colonial administrators, native affairs ‘experts’, ‘ethnographers’, homeland politicians and others linked to past regimes have employed the term ‘culture’ as a one sized all [sic] alibi for abuses of power, for the manipulation of people and their outright oppression (Jordan 2007).

Jordan argues from a political and emotive perspective where activities in the past represent something negative. Taking into account, however, W. D Hammond-Tooke’s (2001) research on the epistemology of South African anthropology, he describes it as contributing to the understanding of African cultures rather than as a mechanism of apartheid oppression. This dissertation will show that Jordan’s speech is not founded on an empirical grasp of heritage, but rather on a political understanding of it. Interesting in Jordan’s speech is the political position from which he argues and how his view of museums as part of the oppressive machinery affects the outcome of Transformation. Jordan’s speech is highly complicated and cannot be applied to the Natal or the Msunduzi Museum. Both the museums were without professional ethnographers and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was not interested in collecting African material culture.

As explained previously, I employ the division Indians, Africans, Coloureds and Whites to highlight how museums deal with heritage in the past and in Transformation. Whites have been polarised as against other groups. It is thus necessary to investigate briefly how they have been constructed and then to deconstruct them for the further understanding of museums. More or less all these groups draw their heritage from the colonial experience, especially Whites. The colonial period was an expansion of economic and political power, White dominance and the institutionalisation of segregation in South Africa. White heritage takes many forms in South Africa and is bound up with the language and landscape of people living in the country. I have here divided Whites roughly into an Afrikaner and anglophile heritage in order to visualise two major stems that oppose each other and other groups.

The Natal Museum represented an anglophile museum and The Msunduzi Museum (VM) an Afrikaner one showing different aspects of heritage. Steyn holds that Afrikaners invested emotionally and economically in South Africa while English-speakers were located in-between Africa and Europe, but both groups regarded themselves as White elites in an African context. Both groups drew their heritage on a colonial frame although Afrikaners objected to colonialism and asserted that they were in South Africa first and could call nowhere else home (Steyn 1999: 267-269). Giliomee (2003: 22-23, 50-51) has reinvented the argument in a post-1994 discourse and argues for an Afrikaner 'culture' and identity as early as the 1700s, thus rejecting Afrikaners as part of a colonial conquest. Afrikaner identity is seen overall as a construction of the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer war and of apartheid. Either way it draws on the colonial framing in its focus on the Great Trek and the Voortrekkers. This was used in political propaganda to unite Whites and differentiate Afrikaners from, e.g., English-speakers and Africans. English-speakers rooted their heritage in British colonialism, their roots were in England and they claimed to be the economically dominant group. There are many academic and museological texts deconstructing Afrikaner identities but few that analyse English-speaking identity.

South African White heritage is bound up with a global discourse of 'whiteness',¹⁴ highlighting White domination that has become a rhetorical tool used to visualise inequalities

¹⁴ 'Whiteness' has here been employed as a political and cultural identity marker to highlight differences in power between the Whites and other groups. It is used to find a point of departure where the Whites' execution of power in a local and global context can be visualised.

in post-apartheid South Africa. The idea of 'whiteness' in South Africa is a complex conglomerate of politics, history and emotion that needs to be deconstructed in order to understand Transformation. Nakayama and Martin (1999: vii), Johnson (1999: 1-9) and Nakayama and Kritzek (1999: 90-96) argue that 'whiteness' represents power and is intertwined with the execution of power. 'Whiteness' gains meaning only when in contact with the other. There is 'no true essence', only constructions of social locations, which is associated with universally defined powers thought to be naturally given. Both Whites and others lived, performed and ritualised 'whiteness' within the social, political and cultural space. Following Headly (2004: 94-96), Yancy (2004: 1-15) and Supriya (1999: 141) I argue that 'whiteness' has become a privileged centre, having power of representation and marking itself as the norm for social acceptability.

Whites in South Africa came to regulate other groups' identity by the power invested and associated with them. Other groups conformed to this and acted out and performed values that the apartheid classifications stipulated. Whites were of course responsible for the constructed practice and upheld the system, but they were not exclusively responsible for upholding and furthering it in society and museums, since all the groups acted on and upheld it partially. Anyone who acts on, performs or ritualises the power of White as a norm, e.g., eurocentrism in museums, is responsible for upholding the power of White. White eurocentric rational principles used in the museum came to be regarded as objective truths able to accommodate any group regardless of heritage. During Transformation this norm was challenged and used as a rhetorical tool; it was visualised to withstand opposition, but was not contextualised as needed.

Transformation set out to deconstruct the White norm and its power at all levels in society. This led to the desired heritage production being expressed as a narration of the elimination of White power – a construct closely related to hooks' (1992: 172) argument that 'whiteness' often implies terror in the black imaginary. This is explicitly visible in Jordan's (2007) speech quoted earlier. Jordan argues from an African perspective where the actions of Whites are politically and rhetorically juxtaposed to the politics of Transformation in order to transmit ideas of what a democratic South Africa should be. The concepts of both Whites and Africans, however, need to be deconstructed and understood through the interlocking of power, space, location and history. The advocates of Transformation have replaced the norms of 'White' with a South African norm having strong African overtones. It is therefore

imperative to deconstruct 'African' as a norm. African as a political norm has materialised itself in Transformation ideals in active opposition to colonialism and apartheid; it is an important point of reference for a discourse still under construction.

Colonialism was significant for Coloured identity in that it arose from inter-racial associations and produced heritage that was a result of migration, slavery and colonialism. Indians also started to arrive in South Africa during the colonial period. They produce heritage drawing on areas of emigration that positioned them in respect of language, group and religion. The experience of travelling to South Africa is part of understanding the self and one's heritage. It became important to know what ship they took and whether they were passengers or indentured labour that distinguished an economic position. The colonial framing became important for African heritage especially in reference to resistance culture and in finding an African discourse of political heritage. In a Zulu perspective King Shaka united Zulu-speakers during the colonial period. The colonial period was used as a heritage of resistance especially expressed during and against apartheid. For all groups the colonial period marks cultural distinctiveness, showing who the groups were at the beginning of segregation. The era becomes a sort of essentialism that is returned to as a focal-point.

Coloured identities functioning as a social identity were principally constructed during apartheid by Whites. Coloureds had more privileges than Africans during apartheid, but they were not Whites, African or Indian, and adhered in many cases to a White heritage. Coloured identity was not regarded as distinctly as African and Indian heritage. Adhikari (2005: 13) argues that Coloureds were the people left over when the apartheid nation had been sorted out. Adhikari writes that 'whiteness' was desired by some Coloureds who tried to pass as Whites, because 'whiteness' conferred privilege that could not be gained otherwise. At the same time some rejected Whites and identified with a 'black political identity' of resistance. At present much of the Coloured community identifies with the 'rainbow nation' or with the Africans. Others express defensive racism against Africans, drawing on apartheid values. Others continue to adhere to racial conceptions of 'Colouredness' with strong affinities to 'whiteness' (Adhikari 2005: 178).

Indians do not form one identity, but were created as such during apartheid. The advocates of apartheid found that Indians had a 'typical physical phenotype' that made it easier to classify them than Coloureds. Segregation gave them distinct Indian identities, though they had

different origins, languages and religions, and made them identify themselves as Indians in distinct contrast to other groups. Indians see themselves as a combination of citizens of the British Empire, as second-class citizens in South Africa, and as something in between Whites and Africans, though basically as superior to Africans. In a post-1994 South Africa, Indians continue to identify strongly with their own cultural identity but draw heavily on western values and cultures (Maharaj 1995: 69-113, Ebr.-Vally 2001: 169-183).

For Biko (2004), Jili (2000) and Jordan (2007),¹⁵ colonialism marked the distortion of African cultures. To regard something as distorted implies belief in an African cultural essentialism that can be distorted in the first place. There is no such thing as essential cultures, but only dynamic and evolving ones. Arguments that colonialism distorted cultural heritage are complicated and do not benefit Transformation. But the concept has united Africans by proposing a difference from Europe that can initiate the construction of an independent identity. The belief in 'essential African cultures' must also be seen against the background of homelands and segregation policies, as these facilitated the safeguarding of indigenous cultures both voluntarily and involuntarily. Such policies provided a way for the apartheid government to control cultural expression and entrench a difference between White and black. Maré (1992: 103) holds that Inkatha¹⁶ used traditionalism as a way to promote a cultural and political identity. Sachs (1991) believes that Inkatha's cultural ideals, although some would object to this conclusion, were seen as affiliated to the political agenda of the apartheid government.

Segregation caused heritage to develop in dependence on the ideas of distinctiveness and uniqueness, whether because of the acceptance or rejection of normative power. These heritage expressions are today seen as essential and are labelled as traditional or indigenous. This follows the traditionalism proposed by apartheid and makes the traditionalism of Transformation all the more complicated. Transformation therefore must not be regarded as an event or a paradigm shift, but as a long sequence of interconnected time and space processes. The traditionalism proposed in Transformation cannot be isolated from the past emphasis on traditionalism. Although Transformation rejects apartheid, it builds on past time, altering it to make it suitable for the expression of a democratic heritage.

¹⁵ Arguing in line with African Renaissance and BCM.

¹⁶ A Zulu cultural organisation.

As noted above, some Whites hold positive connotations of colonialism, whereas Africans emphasise its negative values. Jilli (2002: 2) ascribes the ethnic animosity between African groups in South Africa as a result of colonial administrations enforced by apartheid. Wright (1995), Parson (1995) and Manson (1995), however, argue that animosity existed in African cultures regardless of colonialism. Putting the blame on colonialism is an argument closely related to the theory of negritude built on by the later BCM and African Renaissance. Oruka (2002: 61) explains that the idea of negritude is that Africans serve as one economic and political class and as one cultural unit stressing the need for all Africans to unite. Van Hayley (2000: 59), Mapalala (2000: 58) and Ngubane (2000: 3), hold that these ideologies have played an important part in shaping the political agenda for Transformation. The African Renaissance has greatly influenced the South African museum Transformation. The African Renaissance means to build a new Africa of peace, stability, democracy, equality and non-sexism (Mbeki 1999: xviii) and to secure Africa's reconstruction and development (Diop 1999: 5). African Renaissance is described as a rebirth (Prah 1999: 37), as the building of a new identity (Guéye 1999: 246) and as finding concepts of equality and value systems independent of European models (Tondi 2005: 12). The African Renaissance is a political base calling on Africa to abandon 'sordid beliefs' provided by westerners and to rid itself of its colonial and apartheid history and legacy by turning hardship into prosperity (Makgoba 1998: 85-86).

Transformation entails a search for traditional, essential, pan-African cultures. The view not only rejects colonialism, but also springs from a eurocentric idea of Africans as one people. Thus, drawing on negritude, the BCM and African Renaissance ideas of a pan-African culture aim at bridging the separation created by colonialism and apartheid and at rejecting eurocentric ideas. Since it draws heavily on eurocentrism in its rejection, Transformation cannot escape the fact that it was shaped by a eurocentric discourse. Transformation was in need of a value base, or a unifying philosophy, different from the eurocentric powerbase from which they can argue their case. African Renaissance is central to ANC ideology and it plays what Bongmba (2006: 107) describes as an important role in reclaiming 'Africa from colonial and postcolonial distortions'. Bongmba (2006: 108) continues saying that equating the African Renaissance with 'blackness' is missing the point, but Adhikari (2005: xv) points out that it is fashionable – and even necessary – today for Whites to identify with African culture, especially Whites with high public profiles. African Renaissance has been welcomed. Unlike Bongmba (2006: 108) I suggest that it is not post-nationalistic, but is related to 'black

nationalism'. This becomes especially clear if one investigates its consequence in cultural politics.

Oruka (2002: 60), Phosa (1998) and Jili (2000: 2-3) argue that while colonialism and apartheid present Africans as unintelligent, evil, irrational and without civilisation or history, the African Renaissance aims to reverse this trend. Africans, Indians, Coloureds and Whites critique colonialism with different intentions and outcomes. The White critique is a way to express and come to terms with the guilt of the apartheid legacy by invoking post-colonial theory.¹⁷ Post-colonial critique has given Whites a rhetorical tool, a language, to express what they do not want to be and what they aspire to become. The colonial period symbolises their heritage at a safe temporal distance from the present self. I suggest that colonialism, for some South African White researchers writing on museology, has come to be a rhetorical tool that symbolises and masks apartheid. Colonialism heralds the beginning of legal segregation, and by placing segregation in a colonial frame relocates the responsibilities of subjugation to a European colonial context away from a South African context. I suggest that what is expressed is a critique of apartheid in a colonial frame. African, Indian and Coloured writers actively critique apartheid, but such a direct critique involves an assessment of Whites. Using colonialism as a symbol for apartheid allows a separation between the writer who opposed apartheid and the actual apartheid society.

African, Indian and Coloured writers criticised colonialism as a way of addressing the past and present and finding a means to understand why they were subjugated and addressed as second-class beings. The present cultural discourse has reinvented BCM and negritude writing as a base for Transformation from where protagonists can argue their cultural case. This is especially evident in governmental speeches, for example when Duma (2007) describes colonialism as 'the inequalities that were created by the demons of apartheid and colonialism' and states that 'Our languages, culture, beliefs, customs and all other positive practices of our communities were nullified'. Searching for reasons of inequality in colonial and apartheid times, when African cultures were experienced as distorted, is a way to find and investigate pre-colonial values and identities. Traditional and pre-colonial values have been resurrected and are used at present as strategies to deal with the changing environment.

¹⁷ Seen e.g. in Brooks' (1988, 2005) writing.

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) is a key aspect of Transformation. It has its roots in pan-African ideology and BCM and is intertwined with African Renaissance, as a way to find a value system not built on European models. IKS is defined by Tondi (2005: 122) and Neluvhalani (2005: 72) as a set of knowledge and technologies existing and developing around specific conditions of populations and communities indigenous to a specific area. Moreover, IKS is about the nation finding values and norms that reconnect to traditional roots. This is to explore a non-eurocentric vision of heritage and a way of coming to terms with the apartheid past without agitating against Whites and making holes in a fragile new democracy.

My dissertation will show how the advocates of Transformation use the experience of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid to create a common South African identity. This is similar to Maré's (1992: 55) discussion of the NP during apartheid trying to unite Whites on the basis of a settler identity, e.g., as seen in the Voortrekker imagery. Opposition and difference to other 'cultural groups' is how cultural identity in South Africa has been created. All 'cultural groups' are dependent on the other to state their position. During my fieldwork, it became clear to me that Transformation is a new way to position the heritage of the self and the other in democracy. It is a way of coming to terms with who one is and one's role in a democratic society and how one relates to others and to find something in common as in the imagery of the emerging democracy.

Colonial time marks the beginning of segregation and going back and criticising enables one to find new aspects of cultures not in conflict with each other. Transformation has been positioned as different from the past. This is because the advocates of Transformation have not come to terms with the past or present. Although emphasising multicultural aspects it is the opposition between African and White cultural production that directs Transformation. When people and politicians have come to terms with the past, a united multicultural expression that does not build on the idea of oppositions or diverse unique cultures can be developed. Heritage is at the core of cultural identification and culture is what people fall back on, especially in a turbulent social environment and at times of social change. Transformation calls for a renegotiation and rewriting of cultural heritage, which can appear as a loss to some and a relief to others. In Transformation no one is voiceless. Feelings, opinions, rights and wrongs are all determined to be heard and will not be left out in the name of democracy.

Ubuntu is part of Transformation to find values and standards different from eurocentric and western norms. Broodryk (2002: 8-9, 26) defines it as an ancient African world-view, a core philosophical concept and organisational principle of Nguni-speaking people. It is the value-base of the South African constitution and Transformation. Ramose (2002a), Mbeki (2007), Steyn (1999: 276) explain that the concept of *ubuntu* is that a person is a person through other persons: it is the African philosophy of humanism. The concept involves humanness, sharing and caring, sympathy and respect. *Ubuntu* could be seen, e.g., in rainbow nationalism or in efforts to promote reconciliation. Translated into a heritage context it means that South Africa is a country and has a culture, because cultures exist through and in relation to other cultures. Interconnectedness and not separation are key words and can be a way to deal with the view of diverse heritage. Instead of maintaining diversity in heritage expressions, *ubuntu* could be a tool to transform and amalgamate heritage as a multicultural and mixed expression. *Ubuntu* answers the yearning that the African Renaissance has for finding value systems that are rooted in an African concept in order to deal with the representation and classification of cultural heritage.

Ramose (2002a: 230, 2002b: 643-644), Mbeki (2007) and Prinsloo (1998: 43-45) argue that human dignity through *ubuntu* can conceptualise its perspective on culture, where it rejects the one-sided authority of western institutional knowledge and instead ensures harmony and respectful relations between cultures and cultural representation. This is something that the Msunduzi Museum has, consciously or unconsciously, tried to materialise in the museum. This approach can help South African museums to come to terms with apartheid, show respect for different cultures and create a different reading of identities, history and heritage.

Ubuntu is a method of approaching the construction of history; a way of dealing with one's own heritage and the heritage of others. *Ubuntu* is an approach creating a sensitive discourse, founded in African value-systems that enable one to relate to heritage constructions during apartheid in post-1994 South Africa. Although this philosophy bolsters Transformation, it is not as clearly visible as an ideological tool in heritage discussions as are BCM, Negritude and African Renaissance. Since *ubuntu* calls for the interconnectedness of all people, it also suggests a multiculturalism that is clearly visible in the ANC political propaganda. Multiculturalism entails the deconstruction of power relations: it breaks down the power of White and black. *Ubuntu* is therefore an important approach in organising the heritage

landscape. Moodley (2006) has tried to conceptualise the meaning of *ubuntu* when analysing history, national unity and museums in her work on rock art. She tries to connect South African heritage through rock art to all 'cultural groups' in South Africa. She believes that because rock art exists on South African soil, it concerns everyone in the country. What most 'cultural groups' have in common is a strong connection to the land. Through *ubuntu* this could promote and appreciate different cultural expressions and cultivate a pride in being South African. The South African museum sector, however, is not yet fully using the benefits of *ubuntu* although efforts are being made in the Msunduzi Museum. The museum and heritage sector are still exploring nationalistic values to create identities that fit the political context.

CHAPTER 4. MULTIPLE EXPLANATIONS OF TRANSFORMATION

At an opening at the Natal Museum, assistant director Judith Masters (2000-02-23) said: 'Natal Museum has been working for transformation since the days when it was not yet fashionable to do so'. To understand what she proposed in her speech and to investigate the museum's Transformation it is necessary to study and analyse the socio-political structures on which museums have rested over a long period of time. This will reveal what museums have changed from, what they have changed to and how this has materialised in place, displays and collections.

As an approach to investigate Transformation I have employed Giddens' (1979, 1984) structuration theory that merges human agency and structures by arguing that agents, on the one hand, choose their actions intentionally and, on the other hand, act under force of socio-political structures. This becomes explicitly visible when dealing with museums during Transformation. According to Giddens (1979, 1984), structures can be understood as the necessary means of action and as the cumulative result of the totality of all actions; they are rules of transformation. Giddens (1979: 104, 202, 1984: 14-15) suggests that to understand transformation processes one has to identify prevailing power relations and investigate them over time and space. Drawing on Giddens (1981: 26-29, 91-92 1990: 302, 1991: 204, 1984: 10, 17, 377) and Pred (1984: 289, 1986, 1990: 12), I deduce that Transformation in museums must be regarded as a constant flow of power and events where some events are selected as more important than others. Approaching Transformation in museums according to the structuration theory has enabled me to visualise how agents and museums act according to and in discrepancy with socio-political structures. This causes a multiple and complex explanation of Transformation to unfold. This is different from the overall South African museological writing on Transformation.

4.1 A European structure in Africa

Museums are products of European culture implemented in an African context. Settlers to South Africa introduced the concept of museums, but the museologisation of African objects started before that. Crane (2000) holds that objects were collected for European curio-cabinets by sailors. There was therefore an exchange of information and material culture between the

continents and this was intertwined with the institutionalisation of museums and museological epistemology. The early knowledge production created expectations of material culture from Africa. From this early exchange a discourse arose that was furthered by settler culture. The migration of people, objects and ideas is vital for the understanding of museums. The dominant museum discourse is shaped by relations between collectors, museums and groups from whom material was collected. Museums were vernacularised depending on the socio-political structures applied in an African space and appropriated to the circumstances. Gore (2004: 24-46) suggests that museums in South Africa are a heritage of the British colonial era. This was supported by my informant Gert (2006-04-28). The idea that colonialism spread museums gives their structure a political implication both in the past and in the present. It proposes a difference between English-speakers and Afrikaners and between colonialism and settler heritage. It also proposes that museum were more eurocentric and more closely connected to Europe than if they were the result of Afrikaner heritage. I suggest that a British museum structure exists in an 'in-between space' of Europe and Africa. Afrikaner museums tried to ground themselves in an African experience.

The majority of museologists writing since the 1980s such as Wilmot (1987), Stuckenberg (1987), Hofmeyer (1987), Wright and Mazel (1987), Hofmyer (1987), Owen and Holleman (1989), Odendaal (1995b), Dominy (1992), Hall (1999), Wakashe (2001), Keene and Wanless (2002), Dlamuka and Ndlovu (2002), Dlamuka (2003) and Abungu (2004) argue forcefully that because of their European affiliation museums were biased and eurocentric. It was impossible for them to provide black people with a history that could give them self-confidence and pride. Since colonisation shaped the museum, museologists have insisted that museums are not African enough. No one has, however, been able to identify what an African museum is. 'African' has not been properly contextualised but has come to mean polarised eurocentric or European museums. 'African' is now articulated as the opposite to eurocentrism in the political heritage discussion.

The concepts of 'African' and 'eurocentric' are ambiguous in the context of museums and I hold that museums express these concepts differently, depending on where they are located in South Africa. I call for deeper investigation of the ethnographic material to find 'in-between spaces' of the polarised concepts 'eurocentric' and 'African'. Stuckenberg (1987: 294), Simpson (1996: 2), Hall (1999: 178), Wanless (2001: 21) and Gore (2004: 24), suggested that White colonialism played a significant role in shaping collections, staff, displays and

audience. This was reshaped during apartheid and appropriated into a White South African museum structure. Museums were African, White African institutions, and had to be regarded as different from European museums. The museums were eurocentric because they were shaped in that context; but they were South African eurocentric which cannot be equated with European eurocentric.

When museums developed in South Africa there was a close connection between Europe and Africa. Objects were collected and displayed for Whites to understand Africa and they were shipped to Europe. Gore (2004: 26-27) exemplifies this in the South African Museum¹⁸ that collapsed in 1837 because the curator took away part of the collection when he left the country. Gore (2004: 26-27) describes that as the activities were restored in the South African Museum an act was promulgated in 1857 to protect it. I hold that this indicates that museums with this kind of relationship were not part of South Africa but were captive in an 'in-between space', reflecting the agent's experience of living in-between two cultures and continents. This 'in-between space' constituted the difference between Afrikaner and anglophile museums. Museums were spatialised in territories used by Whites, e.g. in Natal,¹⁹ and became further entrenched during apartheid. Webb (1994: 20), Dominy (2004: 135), and Gore (2004: 29) argue that this was the colonial intellectual conquest of Africa. I partly agree, but suggest that the conquest provided an exploration and understanding of plants, animals and culture. It was a question of power, since the conquered place was institutionalised through objects in the museum.

A year before the Natal Museum opened to the public (1904), it was incorporated into the province (*The Natal Museum Act 11 of 1903*). The museum was subject to colonial legislation and decisions were made by the trustees of the museum constituted at the same time (Pauw 1994: Annexure A, NMAR 1904). The museum opened after the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) and it is possible therefore to read it as a monument to British victory. Since its inception the museum has retained an anglophile atmosphere with a predominantly English-speaking staff.

During the Union of South Africa (1910-1962) segregation between groups based on culture and skin colour started (Snail 1993: 297). Frankental and Sichone (2005: 89-114) and du Pré

¹⁸ Established in 1825 in Cape Town.

¹⁹ Now KwaZulu-Natal.

(1995) describe how laws such as the *Native Land Act 1913* and *Native Urban Area Act 1923* restricted Africans whereas Indians and Coloureds enjoyed more rights in an increasingly segregated environment. Segregation laws affected the museum structure, classification of objects and people, factors such as who could work in the museum and visitors. All these issues were established at this time and became entrenched in society during apartheid.

The government cared for the Natal Museum and funded it under colonial statutes. Following the *Act of Union* in 1910 the Natal Museum was transferred from the Natal government to the Union government in 1911 and functioned under the Minister of the Interior (NMAR 1992/1993, Museum Association 1932: 30, Küsel 1987: vii, Pauw 1994: Annexure A, Du Toit 1949: 52, Webb 1994: 20, Tietz 1994: 56-59, Dominy 2004: 136). The act made the Natal Museum a public service instrument, but under the control of the Board of Trustees it remained semi-autonomous. The Msunduzi Museum (VM)²⁰ was established and handed over to the government in 1912 (Pauw 1994: Annexure A). The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) managed the museum which was established as part of an expression of Afrikanerdom. According to Snail (1993: 300) and Giliomee (1994: 5), Afrikaners could not reconcile with the defeat of the Anglo-Boer war and Afrikaner nationalism developed within the DRC. The English-speakers declared themselves similarly and four out of the twelve new museums were established in Natal. This can be regarded as institutionalisation of anglophile heritage and nationalism.

Pauw (1994: Annexure A) and Du Toit (1949: 52) remark that the government could not assume financial responsibility for museums. In 1913 with the second reading of the *Financial Relations Bill* in Parliament, the government declared itself in favour of keeping the museums in Cape Town and Pretoria as national museums. The Natal Museum became a national museum while the Msunduzi Museum (VM) became a municipal museum. The museums were located on the outskirts of these centres and similar negotiations on location occurred during Transformation. During this time, I argue, one can see a clear tendency of anglophile-orientated agendas in the museum sector. The Afrikaner heritage was not regarded as vital enough by the government for incorporation into the National Museum. These changes ultimately represent the political and cultural aspects of the state apparatus at the time.

²⁰ The museum was named the Voortrekker Museum. Pietermaritzburg. See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

In the 1930s South Africa gained increasing political independence from Britain (Lester, Nell & Binns 2000: 148). During this time the Minister of the Interior established the *State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931*, because the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) had established illegal pension funds for their employees in 1925. The act incorporated and retained the *South African Museum Act 17 of 1857* (Pauw 1994: Annexure A). By *Governmental Notice 825 of 23 April 1948* the governor-general charged the Minister of Education with the execution of *the State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931* (Pauw 1994: Annexure A). Under this act the minister regulated that the museums should be managed and directed by a Board of Trustees of seven members for a period of three years. They were in charge of the property, finances and collections of the museum. This act has great relevance to the museum sector because it formulated the framework on which the museum has continued to rest until the present.

The position of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was not stated clearly. Until 1936 it was regarded officially as a state-aided institution and not as a state institution. In 1936 the position was clarified and the property was transferred to the government. When the museum was transferred a written document was signed between the DRC and the government, stating that an advisory committee called the Voortrekker Museum Committee should advise the government on matters regarding collections, administration and erection of additional buildings (Du Toit 1949: 52). The museum was transferred in 1946 from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Education (MIVM 1946-08-08).

Lester et al (2000: 152-153) describe that during the 1930s there was a policy of retribalisation in South Africa based, e.g., on a distinct idea of African cultures. Inkatha was cheered on by the government. Zulu history and the Zulu monarchy during this time became a crucial part of social control by the government. I hold that part of the retribalisation arose from the need to claim what was considered part of the own heritage and to institutionalise it and show a triumphant heritage. Hence the change in the status of the Msunduzi Museums (VM). Since this occurred during the depression in South Africa, I suggest that there was a need to care for a cultural expression that revealed a spirit of triumph.

Retribalisation has a strong influence on the museum classification process because it stipulates what was African and therefore what was collected. This idea became

institutionalised and continued to exist until the late 1980s, after which it was contested and gained new life in the African Renaissance. A general traditionalism unfolded at this time and Lester et al (2000: 165-167) and Maylam (2001: 210) observe a growing Afrikaner nationalism that rejected the state's White nationalist movement. *A Report on the Museums and Art Galleries of British Africa* describes how the NP came into existence as an embodiment of the memory and sentiment of Afrikaners who had created a great division among the political parties of the time. This affected museums because there was a rejection of anglophile thought patterns, language and institutions (Miers & Markham 1932: 42-43). Afrikaners during the 1930s and Africans during Transformation both reject a dominant group's thought patterns, language and institutions and create a cultural space of their own.

4.2 Towards segregated museums

In 1948 the NP won the elections and set about beginning apartheid and implementing further segregation laws. The population was politically, socially, territorially and economically segregated. Acts such as the *Population Registration Act 1950* divided the South African population and constituted the guidelines for identity. The government also regulated marriages and relations between groups. The 'homelands' were expanded and the African chiefs' power and relation to the state were strengthened. Laws such as *the Bantu Authorities Act 1951* and *the Bantu Education Act 1953* became deliberate ways of reducing urbanisation and controlling the education and employment of Africans (Frankental & Sichone 2005: 123-140). Social development during this time affected how objects and people were classified in museums and made it impossible for museums to represent a multicultural heritage. Although the apartheid period was a blemish in South African race relations many museological changes that became embryonic for Transformation occurred.

The governor-general of the Union of South Africa appointed the Du Toit Commission in 1948.²¹ Its recommendations varied from consolidating different acts, such as the *South African Museum Act 17 of 1857*, incorporating the *Natal Museum Act 11 of 1903* with the *State-aided Institutions Act 23 of 1931* (Oberholzer 1993: 11, Pauw 1994: Annexure, du Toit 1949: 160-178). After the *Du Toit Report* was tabled in 1951 the remaining colonial statutes were repealed and all the state-aided museums functioned under the same act. The report

²¹ The report, submitted to the government in 1950, was known officially as *Report of the Commission of Enquiry regarding certain State-aided Institutions*, and is here referred to as the *Du Toit Report*.

classified these museums as museums for natural history or cultural history. The Natal Museum was classified as a natural history museum while the Msunduzi Museum (VM) became a cultural history museum (Du Toit 1949: 13).

In 1949 the national museums were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Education, Arts and Science. This was perceived by the Natal Museum to have brought a slow but steady improvement, mainly because there had been a desperate need for funding (NMAR 1969/1970). Funding has been an important factor during Transformation. The lack of funding during apartheid made museums look static whereas recent funding possibilities have become part of the democratisation of museums and a catalyst for the materialisation of Transformation. The *Du Toit Report* (1949: 53, 160-178) presented suggestions to make museums fulfil their educational and research tasks by improving displays and collections. It also investigated whether the Board of Trustees was necessary and clearly defined the power of the board. The Msunduzi Museum (VM), it was suggested, should be administered by the Natal Museum. Oberholzer (1993: 11), Pauw (1994: Annexure A) note that only a few recommendations of the *Du Toit Report* were accepted and implemented by the government.

Webb (1994: 40), Tietz (1994: 56-59) and Dominy (2004: 136) argue that museums celebrated the triumphs of Whites, especially Afrikaners, and praised segregation and tribal Africa. Comparing Webb, Tietz and Dominy's statements with the *Du Toit Report* makes it clear that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) served a very small role in the cultural propaganda of apartheid. Yet the *Du Toit Report* (1949: 192-194, 207) highlights the objectives of collections, displays and research connected to White nationalism. The report stressed a need to show origin in Europe and in the classical Mediterranean culture together with warfare, navigation and Christianity and the achievements of Whites and their relationship to the indigenous population. The report wrote that 'Museums that reflect development in a country of many races where all have contributed their quota must surely make for a mutual appreciation and tolerance' and that museums 'make for social stability and social cohesion in a age when are sorely in need of both [sic]' (Du Toit 1949: 195, 196).

White nationalism spatially located White heritage in a European context but in South Africa. In this process they juxtaposed the indigenous population. Whites redefined themselves in preparation for self-governance by retaining the past and shaping an independent heritage

production. At this time there was a need to identify and specialise what was self and other – a process that would intensify during the 1950s and 1960s. The process has many similarities to Transformation, since both eras tried to locate origins, define new heritage expressions, and convey them in museums. Crucial too, was the construction of a heritage production different from an anglophile and African heritage, but located in eurocentric traditional values spatialising the white settlers' achievements.

The Freedom Charter, a protest against apartheid, argued for multi-ethnic relationships and was banned by the apartheid government. *The Freedom Charter* touches on cultural production and how it should ideally be perceived. It states that all people should have equal rights to use their own language and develop their own culture. Culture, *the Freedom Charter* states, should be open to all and the government should encourage, develop and enhance cultural expressions (Nuttall, Wright, Hoffman, Sishi & Khandlela 1998: 43). Despite the appeal from subversive groups, the apartheid government strengthened cultural laws with the *State-aided Institutions Amendment Act 46 of 1957* which reads:

A board may, subject to the approval of the minister, determine during what hours and under what conditions and restrictions the public or any group of persons or persons belonging to a particular race or class may visit an institution or portion thereof and what admission charges shall be payable.

This statute replaced regulation 2 of part IX of the *State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931* (letter from the Department of Education, Arts and Science 1957-07-26). Africans, Coloureds and Indians were not excluded from museums, but there were restrictions placed on them. This law is a clear break with developments in the 1930s, because during the days of the Union, according to Miers and Markham (1932: 30-31) (with two exceptions allowing Africans entrance only on Thursdays if they wore shoes or boots), all museums were open to Africans. Africans seldom took the opportunity to visit museums, however, although museums in East London advertised on posters using African languages to attract visitors.

Museums were not completely racially segregated, but Webb (1994: 20) writes that in 1960 there was an attempt to restrict visits by blacks to one day per week – all other days were open for Whites only. I have not found any archival material supporting Webb's statement. Nor have I found that the Natal Museum acted on the 1957 amendment mentioned above. In the Msunduzi Museum (VM), however, I found several letters from African and Indian schools applying for permission to visit the museum. These had been stamped and approved by the

government. Although Africans, Coloureds and Indians were never excluded from the museums, the restrictions imposed on them are close to what Van der Vyver (2003: 65) defines as 'cultural genocide' which applies when access to cultural institutions is controlled. The 1957 amendment act was the control of heritage and people. Since black people had to apply to visit museums, it is possible to interpret the act as control over mobility and reinforcement of power which weakens the group controlled. Massey (1994: 1, 2005: 183, 150) and Dovey (2005: 285) argue that social division makes hierarchies between races evident and thus becomes vital for the understanding of Transformation.

As South Africa experienced economic growth, a rich Afrikaner middle-class and a growing black working-class formed in the cities. The 1960s were marked by protests and strikes in the major cities; the government declared a state of emergency and banned the African National Congress (ANC) and the pan-African Congress (PAC). The ANC answered by establishing its armed wing *Umkhonto weSizwe*. The generally unpopular 'homelands' were given self-governance and this was upheld by African chiefs and the government (Nuttall et al 1998: 72-87). During the conflict the government focused more intensively on heritage production and the professionalisation of museums. This can be related to economic growth and a need for stability in society manifested in cultural programmes of different kinds.

During this time the *Booyesen Committee* was appointed by the Minister of Education in 1960 to report on the needs of state-aided institutions²² (Oberholzer 1994:14, Pauw 1994: Annexure A). The *Booyesen Committee* dealt with the financial responsibility of state-aided institutions, but most of its recommendations on this issue were not approved. The suggestion that was approved and that concerns the Natal Museum was the appointing of an archaeologist in the museums (Oberholzer 1994: 15). The position was filled in the 1970s and was one of the major changes in the Natal Museum that led up to Transformation and the democratisation of the museum at a later date.

The *De Villiers Report* (1968)²³ was an investigation of the national museums by the government. The report came to the conclusion that state-aided institutions should be helped to develop as scientific and cultural centres within the framework of a national development

²² The committee emphasised that there was a need for one body with status instead of the numerous separate boards that would eliminate the periodical investigations by commissions or committees.

²³ Officially known as *Die Verslag van die komitee van ondersoek na die behoeftes van staatsondersteunde inrigtings*, here referred to as the *De Villiers Report*.

programme. It was acknowledged that the museums in the past had not received enough support for their research activities and that more positions for researchers should be granted. The report made a call to professionalise museum research, displays and the classification of collections to make them up to date (De Villiers 1968: 27-34). The report encouraged the Natal Museum to establish a historical department and displays and acknowledged the importance of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) and its need for additional accommodation (De Villiers 1968: 54-55, 127-132). This report shows differences from the *Du Toit Report* which suggested that the museum be incorporated in the Natal Museum. During this time Afrikaner heritage production evidently became important to the government.

Tietz (1994: 62) holds that since 1961 the museum movement in South Africa had been characterised by an increase of new museums and the expansion of existing museums. This must be understood as an increasing cultural resistance to a turbulent political climate and as the manifestation of White heritage and intellectual deeds. Gore (2004: 45) holds that as an integral part of Afrikaner nationalism and the rejection of anglophile heritage, about 41 new museums were founded.²⁴ In rejecting Afrikaner nationalism, museums centred on memorabilia of the early British settlers and showed love and strong ties for Great Britain (Gore 2004: 45). The *De Villiers Report* tried to construct White heritage institutions in the new Republic affected by a conflicting socio-political environment.²⁵

The *Cultural Institution Act 29 of 1969* and the *National Monuments Council Act 28 of 1969*²⁶ marked important changes in the museum sector. The passing of these acts was a result of the *South African Republic Constitution of 1962*, in which the republic created a new wave of nationalism, visible in museum displays and collections. These acts were a way of consolidating this. The *Cultural Institution Act 29 of 1969* enacted that the committee of a state-aided institution should become a statutory body. It became a forum through which museum directors could advise and be advised directly vis-à-vis the minister. This improved the director's position in the museum and meant that the Board of Trustees did not function as

²⁴ Most of them local museums founded by an individual or an organisation.

²⁵ Among the report's recommendations was that a comprehensive subsidy formula be established to enable the institutions to fulfil their functions. This meant that the institutions could start long-term financial planning (Pauw 1994: Annexure, Oberholzer 1994:15-16, De Villiers 1968). The report also commented on the regulations in the *State-aided Institution Amendment Act 46 of 1957* and called for an investigation of the regulations in relation to the public (De Villiers 1968).

²⁶ The council nominated national heritage and conserved archaeological objects.

a middleman between the museum and the government and that the director could act more freely.

The *Niemand Report*²⁷ (1975) was established because of financial factors and the promulgation of the *Cape Provincial Ordinance 31 of 1968* and the *Natal Museum Ordinance 26 of 1973*. The latter arose from the need to establish a provincial museum service from which the museums could borrow items for their displays (Niemand et al 1975: 4, Pauw 1994: Annexure A). The *Niemand Report* was not well received by the museum sector when it was tabled in parliament in 1976 (Pauw 1994: Annexure A). The reason for this was that the report brought forward the lack of professionalism in museums and the lack of curatorial practice, professional cultural historians and up-to-date displays. Oberholzer (1994: 20-24) has shown that the main complaint of the Natal Museum was that there was no historian to research the history of the Battlefields. This must have been a hard blow for museums struggling under severe financial restraints. The criticism levelled shows similarities to Transformation and highlights that museums did not meet government satisfaction. Oberholzer (1994: 20) shows that museums criticised the *Niemand Report* for not understanding the premises under which museums worked.

The Natal Museum reacted to the *Niemand Report* and in a memorandum from the director to the Board of Trustees the former suggested that the museum should establish a new post of cultural historian in order to create a research climate and an academic collection (Stuckenberg 1981). The *Niemand Report* (1975) suggested cultural and natural history museums should be separated, but the director of the Natal Museum suggested that there were many valuable aspects linking these together (Stuckenberg 1981). The *Niemand Report* made an unsuccessful attempt to deconstruct previous ways of merging nature and culture in one place. During Transformation this way of presenting science was highly criticised and Dominy (1992) states that museums could in the worst cases be regarded as equating African heritage with animals.

The *Niemand Report* debated whether the Msunduzi Museum (VM) should continue as a museum at all since display space was lacking and there was no curator to care for the

²⁷ Officially known as *The Report of the commission of inquiry into the co-ordination of museums on a national level*, here referred to as the *Niemand Report*.

collection. The report could be the reason why Ivor Pols²⁸ was hired as director. The report also discusses whether the Msunduzi Museum (VM) could become a national cultural history and open-air museum (Oberholzer 1994: 31). This was inspired by the eco-museum movement which according to Simpson (1996: 71-72), extended museum activities beyond the museum building. This suggestion became central to the expansion of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) in the 1980s when exploring Afrikaner heritage led to a greater professionalisation of the museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was challenged in the *Niemand Report* to fill a need in society just as it would be post-1994.

Both the 1972 ICOM meeting in Chile and the 1974 ICOM definition of museums focused on making the museums play a part in society (Simpson 1996: 71-73). The *Niemand Report* seems to have considered these aspects and challenged South African museums to become more relevant, but not in as racially inclusive a way as Transformation would later demand. In South Africa the eco-museums were used as a part of developing a White heritage and exploring a self especially in regard to Afrikaner heritage.²⁹ Simpson (1996: 73) holds that the eco-museums give groups a possibility to resume control over representation and cultural activities. In South Africa eco-museums were reused post-1994 as a way to democratise heritage expression but also to emphasise cultural uniqueness, which was entrenched in the social consciousness, especially in the case of the Msunduzi Museum (VM). The eco-museum institutionalised socio-political structures, and the *Niemand Report* (1975:11) entrenched heritage in the service of cultural propaganda by stating that structures were a valuable asset for the state.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) started negotiations with the government to become a cultural history museum (NVM 1982-09-08). Two years later the director travelled to various parts of Europe and the USA to study different open-air museums and get inspiration on how to develop the museum into an open-air museum (NVM 1986-06-19). This development stagnated during early Transformation but was later reinvented in an African context to enable control over heritage. Thus Transformation built on aspects from the late apartheid era though the agents and ideologies were different.

²⁸ Director between 1979-2002.

²⁹ Further explored in Chapter 5.

In the end only three of the *Niemand Report's* 34 recommendations were approved or implemented (Pauw 1994: Annexure, Oberholzer 1994: 27-30).³⁰ No White Papers were published on this report because of what Oberholzer (1994: 27) describes as ill-considered recommendations. He goes on to state that the reception of the report by the Department of National Education was unknown because the department's records were confidential.

The museum has been emphasised as static and enforcing colonial and apartheid ideals. I have shown that museums were never static and underwent several changes. There was not one version of White heritage and it was a problem to define it. Museums were only partial repositories of White nationalistic ideologies because of the fact that museums and the government had problems defining White heritage. It was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that such ideals were properly consolidated in the museums at a time when apartheid was drawing to its end.

4.3 Towards transformed museums

The 1976 Soweto student uprising that led to nationwide rebellion in South Africa marked the beginning of the end of apartheid (MacDonald 2006: 68). The BCM was by now an important intellectual component in the struggle and influenced the outcome of museum Transformation. Nuttall et al (1998: 93-94) describe how BCM opened up a channel for challenging the inferiority complex that Africans experienced in relation to White dominance. BCM sought to promote a pride in black culture, experience, skills and values, keywords used in Transformation. In recognition of BCM subversive groups such as the ANC developed a resistance culture that challenged eurocentrism. During Transformation, again, nationalistic ideals of African heritage that Inkatha³¹ promoted were explicitly seen later in Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM). Transformation builds intellectually on BCM ideals, which I have explicitly experienced in my fieldwork on policy documents and in my informants' ideas of museums.

The ANC established a Department of Arts and Culture in 1982. Around this time the ANC, after three conferences, drew up the directives for the 'cultural struggle' which recognised its

³⁰One of the main suggestions was that a Museum Advisory Council would be established to advise the minister of National Education. The National Advisory Committee for museums was established administratively and not as a statutory council as envisaged. It was appointed mainly for the purposes of assisting the Department of National Education to deal with the then nearly five-year-old *Niemand Report*, but was never clearly minuted.

³¹ Inkatha was re-established in 1975 as a Zulu cultural organisation.

importance in a democratic society (Odendaal 1994: 3). During the 1980s there was an immense focus on Zulu history. The focus was to be expected because it complied with the ideals that Whites had about Africans and the 'homelands' (Nuttall et al 1998: 96-97, 114). African traditional heritage was used as a means of resistance just as it had been used by the government to oppress Africans. The focus on African traditional heritage used and promoted during Transformation is therefore in a complex position of acting like apartheid structures and at the same time being a means of resistance.

The protests of the late 1970s and early 1980s gave rise to a tricameral parliament (1983) that was a way of dividing the government's opponents (MacDonald 2006: 70). The system attempted to co-opt Coloured and Indian groups into government, but not Africans. Coloured and Indian participation was in the subordinated houses of parliament. The *Republic of South Africa Constitution Act 110 of 1983* focused on differentiating cultures and specifically set out to respect, further and protect the self-determination of population groups. The 1983 constitution defines 'own affairs' as 'Matters which specially or differentially affect a population group in remaintenance of its identity and the upholding and furtherance of its way of life, traditions and customs'. Legally the apartheid policy concerning culture was here clearly spelled out. I agree with Owen and Holleman (1989: 12) who argue that the constitution showed an obsession with race and group identity and thus indirectly confirmed the wish in the state for museums as part of the ideological state apparatuses. Dominy (1991-05-05) held that generations of implicit racism now became explicit in a system which ruined museums and that the themes and policies of museums became the hegemony of militaristic Whites. The constitution, although it somehow opened up the community, still enforced separate identities, cultural uniqueness and overall segregation. Previous constitutions did not explain cultural heritage or identity in this way. This shows that during the end of apartheid there was a need to define what White heritage was and what it was not. The constitution, by acknowledging the uniqueness of all different heritages, retained the supremacy of White heritage and ensured that heritage did not intermingle.

The concept of 'own affairs' (White) and 'general affairs' (black) museums was announced and published in the *Cultural Institutions Amendment Act 25 of 1983*. Oberholzer (1993: 33) and Pauw (1994: Annexure) observe that the act took effect in 1984 and that seven of the 18 national museums under the Department of National Education (in terms of the *Cultural Institution Act 29 of 1969*) became 'own affairs' and transferred to the Department of

Education and Culture (House of Assembly). Webb (1994: 23-24) argues that these represented White history. The other eleven museums remained with the Department of National Education as general affairs museums. Webb (1994: 23-24) asserts that these were natural history museums. This is wrong, however, as I will discuss below.

According to Oberholzer (1993: 33) and Pauw (1994: Annexure) the Educational Advisory Committee for museums was never consulted about the changes. Museums were only informed in 1985. The Natal Museum, however, seemed to be aware of the act before it was amended. They defined it as far-reaching and significant. Natal Museum held that the act would enable the museum to function better and that it had come at a crucial time. After the act was amended the museum was dissatisfied that it was the minister that elected the chairperson of the Board of Trustees and not the board itself (NMAR 1980/1981, 1984/1985, 1985/1986).

The reasons for the 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' division was the breakdown of the provincial system. It had become necessary for the government to decide what would fall under whose control (Broughton 1988-08-09). The museum community was not pleased with this development. Margaretha Ambler said to *The Natal Mercury* that 'when something is "own affairs" it means it belongs to a particular race group' (Broughton 1988-08-09) and Christopher Till, chairperson of SAMA, said to *The Sunday Times* that the situation for the museums had worsened in 1983 and that:

Before, there were museums on the national, provincial and local level. The new constitution further divided museums into own and general affairs. This led to a greater division and disintegration among museums in general ... As a result of this uncertainty, development ceased to a large extent – these museums became nobody's responsibility (Jansen 1991-01-20).

Although the concepts in the act were only implemented in 1985 and only existed for about ten years, the act was made into a symbol of museums in apartheid South Africa by museologists such as Dominy (2004), Webb (1994) and Gore (2004). The fact that few museologists were pleased with the division is seldom taken into consideration. Nor is the opposition to it. Both the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) were considered 'own affairs'. The Natal Museum was a natural history museum and had been classified as such, but owing to its collection and display of White material culture it became classified under 'own affairs'. This shows the inconsistency in the structure and the arbitrary norms of

apartheid classifications. Although apartheid is usually narrated as having rigid norms from which power was executed, my field research has shown that the system was highly inconsistent. The positioning of apartheid as a rigid framework served a political purpose during Transformation in order to point out what museums should not be.

According to the Msunduzi Museum's (VM) director, Ivor Pols, the concepts of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' hampered the idea of the museum to develop into a multicultural museum (Von Klemperer 2002-02-21). The director made this statement after the museum had undergone serious Transformation in 2002. His claim may be an after-construction and could be subservient to the socio-political climate, but Pols went on to assert that when the museum moved to a new building³² he had approached the government to allow him one wing to display Indian heritage. According to Pols, his plan could not proceed when the museum became an 'own affairs' museum. He said that it was only after 1994 that it was able to become a multicultural museum (Von Klemperer 2002-02-21). I have not found any archival material that supports Pols' statement. The new building was acquired in 1987, three years after the 'own affairs' concept was implemented, and there is no formal legislation that would have hindered his plans. The Natal Museum was also classified as 'own affairs' and displayed both Indian and African heritage. So there was nothing that hindered the Msunduzi Museum (VM) from doing so. I suggest that the director in his statement was trying to correct the past and the institution's connection to White dominance. My informants claim that there was some resistance from the director towards change. Pols' statements express what could be called the amnesia of apartheid.

In 1986 the pass laws were repealed, South Africa declared a state of emergency, and internecine war³³ broke out in KwaZulu and Natal. At the same time the international community intensified its critique against South Africa with sanctions and boycotts (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 692). The museum community started to discuss how to be more relevant to black communities. The 1987 SAMA conference in Pietermaritzburg, hosted by the Natal Museum, aimed to examine how the museum could adapt to the changing social environment because 'We do not know, for we have never seriously attempted to find out'

³² Longmarket Street Girls' School building, see Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

³³ Also referred to as Udlame, the violence.

(*The Natal Witness* 1987-05-06a). John Kinard³⁴ stated that the museologists of South Africa knew more about African animals than they did about African people, and he meant that museums were places where the visitors could be helped to understand themselves, their past, present and future (*The Natal Witness* 1987-05-06a, b, c, d 1987-05-08, *The Natal Mercury* 1987-05-09, *The Daily News* 1987-05-06, 1987-05-11). I found that although the Natal Museum had developed more community-friendly programmes before this conference, the active approach of challenging old structures became more visible after the conference. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) seemed to be unaffected by the conference message.

During the conference director Brian Stuckenberg³⁵ of the Natal Museum predicted the future and said ‘to exhibit African cultural goods in the context of academic studies to which white and other ethnic groups are not equally subjected, will soon be seen as discriminatory’ (*The Natal Witness* 1987-05-06a). The conference led to the adoption of the important ‘Pietermaritzburg declaration’ stating that museums should be open to all, no matter race or creed. The conference came to be known as a ‘watershed conference’ involving several controversies (Nigel 2006-04-11). Stuckenberg said in opening the conference that: ‘Museums must begin to plan for the different South Africa on the threshold of which we now stand’ (*The Natal Witness* 1987-05-06a). The week of the conference was also the week of the election and Dominy (1991-05-05) held that the words spoken at the conference had some impact on how society and the museum were seen.

The conference challenged government ideals and members of the Department of National Education were present, so revealing White awareness and self-critique of heritage productions. The conference was the first at which the South African museum was critiqued as being eurocentric and Victorian. It also led to the production of many articles criticising museums. From here an epistemology of transformative museological writing developed. Very few articles, however, have been innovative in their critique. Most of them repeat statements made by Stuckenberg (1987) and Wright and Mazel (1987) of museums being eurocentric, exclusive, not community friendly and unrepresentative. Writings on this topic were a way for White museologists to debate their concerns about change and their negotiations shaped Transformation. After 1994 multicultural researchers tried to come to terms with the past and continued to shape their perception of Transformation.

³⁴ An African-American guest speaker from the Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum in Washington USA.

³⁵ Director 1976-1994 and first appointed to the museum in 1953.

A significant event that contributed to understanding Natal Museum's self-critique was the director's travels to Germany in 1989. The visit to Germany was partly to investigate how museums there dealt with the period after World War II in relation to Nazi heritage (*The Natal Mercury* 1989-04-25).³⁶ During my fieldwork I have come to understand that White South Africans tend to compare apartheid to Germany during the Nazi period. Relating themselves to the aftermath of World War II gives them a reference of how to deal with their own guilt of apartheid. Stuckenberg told *The Daily News* that museums could be an instrument of social change and reconciliation if they were able to reflect the segments of society honestly. He held that correcting past distortions and misconceptions was necessary and appealed to educated society to view cultural diversity as a source of pride not a potential conflict (*The Daily News* 1989-05-02, 1989-05-06). Stuckenberg said: 'Through museums you can discover your own history and culture. Sometimes people oppose their pasts when they are confronted with them.' (*The Daily News* 1989-05-02). The director's comparison of apartheid with the Nazi era showed that people reacted similarly; the older generation wanted to forget and the younger generation wished to move on (Stuckenberg 1993-11-09, Nigel 2006-04-11). Stuckenberg said:

In South Africa, we see escape in the literal sense by emigration, and we can see also signs in the white community of the appearance of a collective amnesia suggestively like that in Germany. I believe we cannot pretend that apartheid never occurred, and I am convinced that our museums must be active champions of cross-cultural respect, sympathy, tolerance and equity. We must act now to help our society to confront that traumatic period as frankly and as quickly as possible (Stuckenberg 1993-11-09).

Stuckenberg had an interest in new museology that deeply influenced the self-critique carried out by the museum. Harrison (2005: 43-48), Meijers (1996: 8), Bal (1996b: 201-202) and Stam (2005: 55-60) have argued that new museology aims to place the message, not the object, in focus. I suggest that this became a political point from which apartheid could begin to be problematised in museums. The Natal Museum had already started a programme before Transformation to change in line with new museology. Despite these developments, few museologists have given any credit to the developments during apartheid and have described them as static, Victorian and racist. Mainly because it serves a point in post-apartheid cultural political debate, to include something positive about this period would weaken the position from which Transformation is argued.

³⁶ He discovered in Germany that museums were going through a change and that focus was shifting away from the Victorian ideal to a more issue-orientated approach. He noted that South Africa had a historical approach while the German museums had a more contemporary approach.

At the same time that Stuckenberg visited Germany, the *Cultural Institutions Act 66 of 1989 (House of Assembly)*, was promulgated to regulate the affairs of the seven ‘own affairs’ museums that had been transferred to the Department of Education and Culture (House of Assembly) (Pauw 1994: Annexure, Oberholzer 1993: 34, Dominy 2004: 136, Webb 1994: 20). The act gave the museum’s Board of Trustees autonomy in economic matters. This autonomy led to the Natal Museum appointing Mabongi Mtshali as an educational officer, making her the first African ever to be employed as such by a museum in South Africa. What remained for the Natal Museum was to repeal various regulations and amendments in order to give legal force to her appointment (NMAR 1987/1988). Mtshali was instrumental in establishing a museum club for African Township children. She brought the museum to the township schools, tried to encourage the children to stay in school, and implemented a means to enhance their learning. My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) describes the club as ‘a way to overcome the horrible apartheid legacy’. His view was shared by my informant Ada (2006-03-21). The *Cultural Institution Act 66 of 1989 (House of Assembly)* was for the Natal Museum a way to proceed with Transformation and played an important role in how the museum altered its activities to accommodate all groups in society, especially Africans.

4.4 Transformation – a struggle for power

In February 1990 the liberation movement in South Africa was unbanned and Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were released. At the same time the war in KwaZulu and Natal intensified and 6000 people were killed, 100 000 became refugees and 20 000 homes were destroyed. The violence in the country was so intense that it threatened democratic negotiations, and the government and the ANC signed a treaty (Nuttall et al 1998: 123-124). The museum Transformation was less violent, but just as political, and the Natal Museum referred to this time as a difficult metamorphosis of South African society (NMAR 1990/1991). There are different versions as to how Transformation in museums started. It was initiated by museums as an internal change, or by the ANC itself (Witz & Rassool 1992). I suggest a third alternative where museums reacted to the changing social environment and where Transformation combined both elements noted above. I argue that Transformation in museums was initiated by Whites, that it was later articulated as a political negotiation between blacks and Whites and that in the end it took the form of a multicultural negotiation.

In 1990 the ANC started to address the political reconstruction of culture and to create policies (Odendaal 1994: 3). The Natal Museum had already started to transform the museum in response to the needs of society and in rejection of the apartheid government, but the changes that the ANC brought were perceived as difficult for the institution to implement. There is a discrepancy; the museum undertook changes because they wanted to, not because they were politically obliged to. This is visible in a letter by director Stuckenberg (1992), where he writes: 'It is gratifying to know that such a high level of motivation and concern for the progress of the museum exists within our staff even in such stressful and uncertain times.'

When the negotiation for Transformation started, the museum sector was in crisis because of inadequate accommodation and staff and lack of funding. The latter had serious implications for museums and made the museums look even less community friendly. The 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' concepts caused problems by revealing the fragmentation of the museum sector. Cristopher Till said to *The Sunday Times* that the museums had fallen at least ten years behind (Jansen 1991-01-20). The SAMA held a discussion with the Minister of National Education, Louise Pienaar, and set up a working group with SAMA to investigate the problems and make recommendations³⁷ (Jansen 1991-01-20). Mike Cluver³⁸ commented to *The Natal Witness* (1991-03-25): 'In a country where museums ... fall into decay or despair it says a lot about the values and the situation in which that country finds itself'. Cluver continued:

As we enter a period where new and maybe different kinds of decision makers are looking at us, or will be looking at us, we have to be seen to be performing a very wide range of tasks and not tasks which are directed specifically towards a single aspect of the population ... performing a national task and not a sectarian task (*The Natal Witness* 1991-03-25).

Msunduzi Museum (VM) was considering how it could matter more to the country and wanted to focus on the differences and similarities of all local 'cultural groups' in themes such as music, storytelling and games (Pols undated). What seemed to be a multicultural suggestion, however, overemphasised White heritage, suggesting a lack of interest in other heritages. At the same time the ANC developed cultural programmes and established a commission on museums, monuments and heraldry in 1991 within the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture. Odendaal (1994: 3) and Wilmot (1995: 3) hold that the aim was to

³⁷ As the museums were hit by subsidy cuts in 1991, the committee of Declared Institutions met to discuss strategies for survival.

³⁸ Director of the South African Museum in Cape Town.

encourage the government to develop democratic policies for museums. In December 1991 the ANC appointed commissions to prepare a policy for museums, monuments, archives and national symbols.

There are two versions of who initiated Transformation. Either it was the ANC meeting in Bloemfontein in 1992 or the Department of National Education meeting two months later in the Pilot Committee for the Investigation of a National Museum Development Policy (Odendaal 1994: 3). From the latter arose the *Museums for South Africa: Inter-sectorial investigation for national policy (MUSA)*. Wilmot (1995: 5) and Pauw (1994:30) point out that in January 1991 the SAMA delegation met with the minister of the Department of National Education to request the formulation of a national policy for museums. The reason for this request was the problems and fragmentation of museums under ‘own affairs’ and ‘general affairs’. My informant Nigel³⁹ (2006-04-11) holds that *MUSA* was intended to be an independent report, but it was perceived as a product of apartheid. The *MUSA* report had been finished a month before and was released after the democratic elections in 1994 (Pauw 1994: 30, Odendaal 1994:3, Wilmot 1995: 5, Odendaal 1994: 6). When *MUSA* was published there was no interest in it, since it did not correspond with the new political objectives. In retrospect it is questionable whether there is any importance in who initiated Transformation, though such discussions do highlight how power was negotiated in museological writing.

MUSA was represented by different stakeholders.⁴⁰ Two attendants represented the Natal Museum, suggesting that the museum was active in establishing the report. Therefore the reactions to the report must be seen in that light. Pauw⁴¹ (1994a: 4-5) holds that the representatives came from various backgrounds working for a positive post-apartheid South African museum structure. Odendaal (1994: 5) writes that *MUSA* was made up of old apartheid bureaucrats. Odendaal (1994b: 7-8) and Odendaal et al (1994: 12) suggest that the *MUSA* committee should have originated from a broader spectrum of community groups and since professionalism was not addressed, *MUSA* could not lead to transformational ethics and practices. Odendaal (1994b: 7-8) and Odendaal, Mazel and Hall (1994: 1) suggest that *MUSA*

³⁹ Also a member of the *MUSA* committee.

⁴⁰ The stakeholders were representatives from South African government and provincial departments, ‘homelands’, museum organisations (e.g. SAMA) and the two committees of Heads of Declared Institutions (Department of National Education and Department of Education and Culture; administration: House of Assembly), Association of Directors of National Collections, the National Monuments Council and museologist representing views of extra-parliamentary groups.

⁴¹ A member of *MUSA*.

could not be trusted to serve the best interests of South Africa and needed to be viewed critically. My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) holds that opposition groups perceived *MUSA* as being part of apartheid, but that it was supposed to be an independent report by museologists. The director-general of the Department of National Education put ‘his stamp on it’ and my informant described that as giving it ‘the kiss of death’ and making it read as a public service document.

What Odendaal (1994) and Odendaal et al (1994) discussed was the function of the museums in relation to the larger society. Odendaal et al (1994: 4) describe the museum as distorting culture, dividing society and performing a sectarian task. Museums could become relevant only if they were interpreted as symbols of apartheid and symbols of distorted perceptions. Pauw (1994a: 4-5) writes that *MUSA* saw museums in their own right and that they could individually make contributions to society. Odendaal (1994: 5) argues that *MUSA* was unable to come up with answers about where to proceed and how to address the colonial and apartheid past. Museologists required answers on how to address inequality and needed strategies to deal with such issues. *MUSA* set a broader framework for addressing the museum structure and its inequalities and could therefore not come up with solutions. Although *MUSA* addressed collections and intangible heritage, and focused on the Pietermaritzburg declaration, it was not further used. The above writers seemed to expect that its policy would solve the problems that apartheid had placed on museums.

Odendaal (1994b: 7-8) held that because of the low standards in museums *MUSA* was unsatisfactory and unable to resolve the relationship with the Department of National Education.⁴² Odendaal (1994: 6-8) held that it failed to provide broad-based national policy and to address the inequalities of apartheid although it set out to do so since it was made up of old decision makers. Although *MUSA* brought forward a few changes on how to be community friendly, it retained the old system and Dominy⁴³ (2000: 3-4) describes it as the House of Assembly trying to get rid of the resistance.

The Natal Museum welcomed *MUSA* because it confirmed the role of the museum as a repository of national heritage and an instrument of national reconciliation, tolerance and mutual understanding – something that the Natal Museum had worked towards for some

⁴² Responsible for the Bantu education policy among other things.

⁴³ A staff -member at the Natal Museum that served on the *MUSA* committee.

years. The Natal Museum qualified as a national museum according to *MUSA*'s requirements (NMAR 1993/1994). Odendaal's (1994b: 12) major criticism was that although making valuable suggestions *MUSA* did not deal with how museums could contribute to reconstruction, development, nation-building and tolerance, since as he described it, the *MUSA* group was insular and elitist. I argue that it is easier for Odendaal to critique *MUSA* and portray museums as instruments of apartheid than it is to come up with real suggestions. One of the reasons that *MUSA* did not redress imbalances and give new interpretations was, as Odendaal et al (1994: 12) assert, that the ANC was invited to serve on the committee but chose not to. The structural changes of the museum sector influenced the Natal Museum to evaluate their work. They found that they needed to investigate the relevance of the museum in a larger social context by increasing projects, promoting public awareness and employing a fluent Zulu-speaking guide to address the low level of literacy (working group 1 1992: 11). Although *MUSA* did not address all the aspects it can be seen as a catalyst for the museums to start re-evaluating their activities.

In 1993 the ANC convened the International Culture and Development Conference where important guidelines for the future of museums in South Africa were adopted. In November 1993 the ANC replaced the Commission on Museums, Monuments and Heraldry with the Commission for the Reconstruction and Transformation of the Arts and Culture (CREATE). The commission presented its report in the form of a policy framework at the above mentioned conference in 1993 (Odendaal 1994: 3). One of my informants, though biased by serving at *MUSA*, described that the ANC had no plan in place and that their perception was that everything had to be changed (Nigel 2006-04-11). There was a discrepancy between the very proactive Natal Museum, which had already implemented several changes, and its general view of political structural change. The museum wanted to reach out to people, but did not trust the upcoming political dispensation as capable of providing professional governance.

The main objectives of CREATE were to examine existing legislation and policy. One of the main tasks for investigation was the *MUSA* (Odendaal 1994: 3). Unfortunately very little archival material from the ANC can be found in the museums. It is therefore possible to conclude that the ANC did not communicate its suggestions to the museums and the museums took no interest in the suggestions. I have made efforts to recover minutes and documents

concerning these negotiations from the ANC, but without success. Therefore I have to rely on secondary sources published by Whites.

The ANC policy on museums was published in *Semantix* 1993 (Wilmot 1993). It is far from comprehensive and contains few practical suggestions on how to develop museums in a democratic society. The policy deals mainly with ideological factors and not with the practical issues of the museum, failing to solve any structural issues and merely highlighting the problems of museums. Yet, the policy sought to overcome the legacy of inequality and the injustice created by colonialism and apartheid in a progressive way. Museums, according to the ANC (Wilmot 1993: 10-11), should foster national unity, reconciliation and democratic values and be of educational benefit to South Africans. The emphasis on education was to address the legacy of Bantu education policy. The ANC built on a larger political framework. It argued that heritage resources were overly racist and narrow-minded, forming a colonial and apartheid exploitation incapable of upholding democratic values. It found it necessary to replace statutes by racist legislation to foster a holistic strategy for heritage resources (Wilmot 1993: 10-11). Odendaal (1994b: 7) believes that the policy tackled the problem of apartheid and colonialism. I hold that it did not, however, and that it merely points out the issues. By visualising the inequalities, however, the ANC policy was ahead of *MUSA* when re-negotiating apartheid structures. Whereas *MUSA* was openly criticised, very few writers criticised the ANC policy's lack of insight into the museum sector. I contend that the policy was not debated because museologists did not want to be seen as pro-apartheid, because they did not know how the future political situation would handle the critique and quietly awaited the new guidelines for museums to survive the interim process.

Odendaal (1994b: 12) argues that the ANC was justified in not participating in *MUSA* because of the limitations and because CREATE suggested that *MUSA* should be retained in draft until it could be investigated by a more representative group. What Odendaal fails to address adequately is the ANC's policy failure in dealing with the practical situation of museums. This suggests lack of knowledge of museum structure which would benefit from broader insight into the practical work of the museum sector and not simply ideological suggestions. The ANC policy proposes that museums should not just focus on letters and art, but on all modes of life, rights of people, value systems, beliefs and neglected history. The suggestion embodies Transformation of display and collection and is a reaction to the fact that Africans did not themselves represent heritage in museums and further regarded their heritage as oral.

What also embodies Transformation is the suggestion of human resources, affirmative action and empowerment through training programmes, redressing imbalances in collections and developing educational programmes. The ANC policy falls short in suggesting how this could be practically implemented. Wilmot (1993: 10-11) and Odendaal (1994b: 10) observe the suggestion for a National Heritage Council (NHC) as a unit that could care for policies, advise the government and distribute funds. The council was to serve as a middle-man between the museums and the government so that the interest of a broader community could be addressed. The NHC's role is at present being implemented and has started to affect the work of the museums.

Transformation was in many respects difficult for the Natal Museum, according to my informant Arthur (2006-05-02), who argued that the new government wanted change for the sake of change in order to show a difference. Arthur did not approve of the changes and argued in line with *MUSA*, which he saw as sensitive since it evolved before the election. He felt that the government wanted to show its difference from apartheid, e.g., in new facets of heritage and to recover heritage that was believed to be lost. He thought that the government did not understand that *MUSA* acted in the best interests of museums. He criticised the new people who came in from the top and failed to consider the museum workers. He regarded Transformation as a regression for museums from which they had not yet recovered.

The adjustments to a new political agenda were difficult, and the tone and critique in the Natal Museum's Annual Report sharpened after 1994. I suggest that this had to do with loss of power and insecurity in a new political dispensation, and with a belief that the structural principles on which the museum was founded would be thrust out. The changes envisaged were intertwined with larger socio-political changes in general and produced a feeling of uncertainty. The museum was a symbol of eurocentric knowledge and culture and was about to be changed into an African institution that had only just defined itself ideologically. Meanwhile the museums had to wait for new guidelines to follow.

4.5 Making museums democratic

The ANC assumed power in the first democratic elections in April 1994, but left the cultural portfolio to the IFP under Ben Ngubane. The political parties held different views on heritage. The Natal Museum had secured its governance by employing a new White director, Jason

Londt,⁴⁴ who, I hold, prolonged the upcoming changes and ensured governance over the museum. Installing democracy was a period of uncertainty and confusion for my informants, since a lot of structures had to be re-evaluated and renegotiated. This was perhaps due to what Notombazana Botha⁴⁵ said later – that museums should not be seen in isolation from ‘our young democracy’ (Botha 2006-10-06). Not everyone agreed that Transformation was difficult; my informant Gustav (2006-11-07) regarded it as awakening and opening new ideas.

Negotiations for a new heritage took some years to implement because of the unstable environment of Transformation. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) Board of Trustees noted the political change and decided to give its whole-hearted support to the government’s attempt to promote the culture of the nation (NVM 1994-06-14). The Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) were under negotiation to become provincial museums, meaning that they would lose their national status. This worried the Natal Museum which acted against it. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) waited on government decisions. It emphasised that placing it under provincial government would abolish hope for its continuity, since its theme was in stark contrast to ANC and IFP cultural ideals. It was decided that all negotiations with various groups should be delayed or stopped until it was decided under whose control the museum would fall (NVM 1995-02-08). When director Pols was asked what he was most proud of upon retiring from the Msunduzi Museum (VM), he said that it was changing the museum ‘to reflect what it should reflect – the cultures of the province and the country’ (Von Klemperer 2002-02-21). There is a clear discrepancy between Pols’ statement and my informants’ description of how developments towards a multicultural museum were slow and filled with conflicts (Margareta 2006-10-11, Francis 2006-10-19)

The Msunduzi Museum (VM), according to Dubin (2005: 177-178), did not think that the Transformation worked out well and the institution was filled with racism and counter-accusations. Msunduzi Museum (VM) had a more emotional Transformation than the Natal Museum and Dubin (2005: 177-178) argues that this was because the latter was a natural history museum. I argue that he misinterprets the concept of the two institutions and their history. Due to Msunduzi Museum’s (VM) legacy as an Afrikaner institution, and the cultural role it assumed during apartheid, it presented heritage and the Natal Museum presented

⁴⁴ Director between 1994-2003, first appointed to the museum in 1976.

⁴⁵ Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture (DAC) in 2006.

history. Lowenthal (1996: xi, 128)⁴⁶ holds that history and heritage transmit different things. History is assumed to tell the past as it was, whereas heritage tells myths of origin, filling groups with prestige and clarifying the past while giving purpose to the present. During Transformation both museums and their material expression were leaning towards presenting heritage due to Transformation guidelines. Dubin has misunderstood the organisation principles of the museum because he starts investigating Transformation from 1994. He neglects the fact that Natal Museum had already undergone Transformation for some time, because they wanted to change, unlike Msunduzi Museum (VM) which had to change.

After 1994 the legal and social environment changed and museums had to take the new constitution into consideration (Weintroub 2004: 32-36, Du Preez 2004: 37). This, according to Mpumlwana et al (2002: 245), gave the museums an opportunity to ensure that they embraced the history and heritage of all citizens. The ANC's ideological base, the reconstruction and development programme (RDP), also needed to be considered. The RDP suggested that museums needed to be investigated if they were going to be part of the democratic South Africa (ANC 1994: 15, 18, 70). Museums should therefore integrate the RDP ideals, namely abolish apartheid, racism and sexism, establish educational and outreach programmes and address unemployment (ANC 1994: 1, Küsel, de Jong, Collier & Basson 1994: 4-7, Odendaal 1994: 4-5).

The museums had now to allow and promote a unifying cultural diversity as well as rediscover South African historical heritage (ANC 1994: 8-15). The RDP was influenced by BCM ideals and held that African heritage under colonialism was neglected and distorted and that freedom of expression was stifled. The RDP promoted heritage such as customs, traditions, beliefs and religion so that people would be free to access the diverse expression of South African heritage (ANC 1994: 69). Küsel et al (1994: 3) contend that the RDP held the answer to the museum organisation and had a common vision that was lacking in the past. I do not agree with the researchers, since previous policies under which museums functioned were perfectly clear. Due to the 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' concepts, however, and a changing social environment the policies seemed inconsistent.

⁴⁶ 'History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts as to infuse them with present purposes' (Lowenthal 1996: xi). 'History and heritage transmits different things to different audiences. History tells all who listen what happened and how things came to be as they are. Heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose' (Lowenthal 1996: 128).

Nelson Mandela's government focused on multiculturalism, a rainbow nation and national unity which formed the base of Transformation. Küsel et al (1994: 6) suggest that historical museums should focus on resolution rather than conflict to facilitate nation-building. Solani and Khwezi (2001: 84) hold that nation-building agendas are not something new to South Africans, but are a recurring subject of the past 100 years and are therefore simple to adopt. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996* gave all the people of South Africa equal rights and responsibilities. The constitution also protected the religious expression and the right to participate in the cultural life of one's choice. Du Plessis (2002: 371) and Van der Vyver (2003: 55) hold that the protection of cultural rights is not uncontroversial and stems from the Afrikaner nationalist idea of separate development and the idea of identifying with a culture. Their statement can easily be compared to the constitution of 1983 which argued for a very similar cause; the difference was that in the 1996 constitution all were legally equal. Du Plessis (2002: 377-385) suggests that the 1996 constitution provided for consolidation and nation-building, but did not stipulate how culture should be implemented. Democracy created space for South Africans to celebrate their distinct ethical identities, building on a tradition of visualising and classifying heritage. Instead of being forced as before into an ethnic identity based on language and skin-colour, ethnicity was now celebrated.

Cultural identity became one of the major factors in the materialisation of Transformation. Transformation ruptured the classification between groups and contributed to a common identity crisis and a need to reaffirm and find, overall, traditional identities that could apply in a democratic society. The much criticised classification system of the past was now converted into a nation-building asset under the aegis of national unity. Blaser (2004: 179-185) criticises a nation-building because it maintains apartheid inequalities and has produced a false sense of symbolic unity difficult to identify with. This is especially true since the multicultural approach has shifted since 1997 to an African approach. In regard to the Natal Museum during the 1990s an intense African focus was proposed, since the museum was not considered African enough (Natal Museum strategic plan 1997, MDNM 1991-08-14, 1991-12-11). Never in this discussion was multiculturalism mentioned and I argue that the African focus was the museum's response to political demands.

The RDP proposed a complete Transformation of the museum sector, explaining that museums needed more concrete goals to implement the standards suggested (ANC 1994: 69-

71). I argue that the RDP was too broad to work with and offered few practical solutions, since it included all aspects of society and worked with broad themes like education, non-racism, non-sexism, human rights and democracy. In the museum there were different views as to how it should be transformed. Küsel et al (1994: 5) regarded the museum as a way to empower people and Londt (1995: 3) considered its educational aspects as its greatest asset.

The Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) followed the *MUSA* and ANC policy and was an amalgamation of ideological and practical frameworks. Its report states that the institutionalisation of democratisation means that all aspects of social life must change (ACTAG 1995: 3). My informants Nigel (2006-04-11) and Arthur (2006-03-04) interpreted this to mean that the museums' organisation needed to change completely. ACTAG was established in 1994 to draw up guidelines for new legislation concerning museums. According to my informant this was because the government did not trust the museums to transform on their own (Charlotte 2006-04-21). The ACTAG tried to look at museums holistically and at what role they could play in the socio-economic, educational and heritage sphere. Dominy (2000: 3) describes this process by saying 'the great elephant of culture finally gave birth to a mouse'. My informant Charlotte (2006-04-21) also reflected on this and asserted that the government could not say how the museums were supposed to change because they did not know how to.

Küsel (1995: 40-44) held that ACTAG centred on moral standing and the correction of inequalities which were not main objectives of *MUSA*. Apart from this the report read like a fusion of ANC policy and *MUSA*. Its aim was to depart from previous organisation, but it contained more similarities than differences. ACTAG (1995: 10, 53, 59, 63) became the mean of cultural propaganda, since it worked in line with RDP, redressing past imbalances, stimulating grassroots communities, and awakening interest in identity and community. Pride and knowledge of cultural heritage would contribute to mutual respect, peace, nation-building and national identity. Ideological structures and change in power eventually started to materialise in collections and displays, but not immediately since museums lacked funding and did not know how to materialise the demands made on them.

Organisational Transformation in the form of the flagship institution has been regarded as the outermost embodiment of Transformation. I do not agree with this because it was already provided for in *The Cultural Institution Act 66 of 1989 (House of Assembly)*. Weintraub

(2004: 32-36) and Du Preez (2004: 37) argue that the act made it possible to implement two flagship institutions. *MUSA* introduced retention because it did not regard flagship institutions as national symbols. I hold that the flagship institutions work in opposition to RDP that calls for a people-driven process and a decentralisation of the system, thus making Transformation objectives ambiguous. Although Mpumlwana et al (2002: 250) argue that the flagship institutions would be less independent of the government, I suggest that the government could more easily control and ideologically monitor museums and so make them more dependent. According to my informant Charlotte (2006-04-21), this phase of reconstruction was 'a disaster' and killed the productivity of the Natal Museum. She argued that the restructuring had been in favour of management and that this had made researchers and research suffer.

ACTAG recommended that the National Museums should amalgamate into six institutions to better serve the country (Küsel 1995: 40-44). To investigate how the museums could best amalgamate, the government appointed Deloitte and Touche. Natal Museum initially reacted positively to this, but regretted that the Board of Trustees was left out of the planning process (NMAR 1995/1996). The Deloitte and Touche (1996) report presented a national museum and art gallery infrastructure whose primary function was to collect, conserve and display. After discussion with CREATE, SAMA and *ACTAG* it was decided that there would be two flagship institutions, one in Cape Town and one in Pretoria, serving the other museums and structured like the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, USA. The structural implementation of the flagship institutions was the most difficult facet for my informants. It caused great uncertainty that has still not been resolved for the Msunduzi Museum and the Natal Museum.

The flagship institution would provide management, administration, exhibition and educational support to other institutions. In line with the RDP it would create a national coherent structure, minimise bureaucracy, provide for dynamic use of limited resources, and by housing different collections make sure that research was not duplicated (Deloitte and Touche 1996). The report, if implemented, would have had serious consequences for Natal Museum which was to be relocated to Durban and for Msunduzi Museum (VM) which was to be given to local authorities because its theme was not unique (Deloitte and Touche 1996). This report shows objectives similar to those during apartheid and highlights the fact that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was never considered an important national repository for heritage. The Natal Museum strongly objected to the proposals of flagship institutions because it suggested complete reshaping of the institution. The museum staff and Board of Trustees

were frustrated by what they saw as a distinct lack of appreciation for the work of the museums by the Minister of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) and other officials. The Natal Museum's main concern was that DACST had not defined the steps ahead when dealing with the institutions earmarked for devolution to the provinces (NMAR 1996/1997).

Both the government and the province of KwaZulu-Natal held that the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) should come under Provincial control. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) favoured co-operation with the Natal Museum, but not full amalgamation (MEVM 1996-11-01). Meetings between the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) led to a suggestion that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) should function as the cultural history department of a combined museum and would also have a new name. Pals had reservations about the amalgamation and believed that the institutions might get less funding if the merger happened (MEVM 1997-02-14). Pals thought it was more important at this stage to negotiate with the province for the retention of framework autonomy for the museums. Since it was not clear whether they would retain their autonomy, they wanted to start negotiations as quickly as possible (MEVM 1997-02-14).

The two flagship institutions were formalised in the *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* and became a reality in 1999. For the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) the structural changes were at that time far from complete. Before the flagship institution concept became a reality the museums had time to interact at a meeting in Ulundi in 1995 with the minister of National Education,⁴⁷ Musa Xulu. Despite a power struggle between the museums and the monuments' group my informant was able to present the perspective on museums on the National Museum structure. A report was handed over by the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM). Musa Xulu was very supportive and when it was clear that Natal Museum and Msunduzi Museum (VM) were going to be national museums there was no further debate (Arthur 2006-03-04).

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) Board of Trustees opposed the idea of being incorporated into a flagship institution and concentrated on negotiation with the province rather than with the Natal Museum (letter from Anna 2006-10-09, MEVM 1997-06-14). The reason for this was

⁴⁷ Later changed to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST).

the risk of the museum being amalgamated and disappearing in the Natal Museum organisation. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) hoped, by emphasising its scientific research, to avoid being devolved to the province. When Roger Jardine, director-general of DACST, met with the museum in 1997, however, the museum had already accepted devolution to the province, but stated that it wanted to retain its framework autonomy (MEVM 1997-06-14, letter from Anna 2006-10-09). Although it seemed clear that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was to be demoted, one should add that in 1997 no further meetings were held with Natal Museum or the provincial authorities. The director of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) thought that it was possible that the two National Museums in KwaZulu-Natal might stay under the control of the central government (MEVM 1997-09-26).

Dubin (2005: 179) portrays the director of the Msunduzi Museum (VM), Ivor Pols, as a right-wing Afrikaner. Archival material, however, shows that the museum did not want to be involved in politics of any kind and that it aspired to develop in a way that would benefit the whole of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa (MEVM 1997-02-14). In *The Natal Witness* (1998-04-01) Stuckenberg stated: 'It is clear that the museum has an important role to play internationally and locally and that co-ordination of the museum's activities is best done at national level'. My informant experienced Transformation as being about feeding reduced subsidy into a top-heavy management – quite the opposite of what he thought Transformation should be (Arthur 2006-03-14).

During the time of the flagship institution negotiations, the *White Papers on Art, Culture and Heritage*⁴⁸ was published in 1996. The *White Papers* ensured a revision of ACTAG to improve the suggestions made in the report (*White Papers* 1996, Mpumlwana et al 2002: 249, Weintroub 2004: 32-36). This national policy document sets a governmental standard for establishing the best funding arrangements and institutional framework for the creation, promotion and protection of South African arts, culture and heritage (*White Papers* 1996: 3). The prime role of the national and provincial governments was to develop policy, minimum standards to ensure the survival and development of cultural diversity with mutual respect and tolerance, heritage recognition and advancement and equitable human resources development policies (*White Papers* 1996:3). Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2005) and Joubert and

⁴⁸ Hereafter referred to as the *White Papers*.

Farris (2005: 422), however, hold that an identification of national heritage can illuminate what communities associate with heritage.

Both the apartheid government and the present government drew on aspects of national unity to construct a national identity and carry out nation-building. There is a close relationship between apartheid and democracy in how heritage was promoted by drawing on traditional and community aspects. The *White Papers* addressed 'just' arts, culture and heritage dispensation for all arts and culture institutions and structures (Du Preez 2004: 40-41). The *White Papers* dealt extensively with the heritage sector and particularly with the re-conceptualisation of national museums to present a nationally coherent structure with an emphasis on developing cultural centres in the previous peripheries⁴⁹ (*White Papers* 1996: 12-14, Du Preez 2004: 40-41). The *White Papers* were structurally more coherent than other reports on Transformation and proposed more practical suggestions.

After the meeting in Ulundi, the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) tried to salvage their independence as National Institutions. They proposed the establishment of an eastern seaboard flagship institution that was presented to DACST by the Natal Museum Board of Trustees. They promoted the idea of giving the museum a new identity distinct from the existing museums and drew on ideologies from the *White Papers* and the RDP to ensure the survival of the institution. The report emphasised being economically effective and tried to give weight to the benefits of decentralising the museums from the existing flagship institutions in Pretoria and Cape Town.

The establishment of eastern seaboard flagship institutions would ensure educational support for a densely populated area and would benefit 40% of South Africa's learners. In that way it would serve the local communities in a novel strategy and help those who were particularly disadvantaged during apartheid by promoting a collective heritage and a new identity of a multicultural South Africa (Natal Museum 1997: 1-3). During Transformation the aim was reaching out to the disadvantaged, but much of its advocacy was merely false piety either stating a difference or retaining previous status or, as with the Natal Museum, securing a research and working environment.

⁴⁹ Townships and rural areas.

Despite proposals for change, the Natal Museum and Msunduzi Museum (VM) retained their national status through the *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998*, and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) started to develop into a multicultural museum (VMAR 1998/1999). In 2001 the above suggestions were published and after a meeting with Musa Xulu it was decided that the Msunduzi Museum (VM), the Natal Museum and the Ncome Museum would amalgamate (Arthur 2006-03-04). Because of lack of archival material, it is unknown how the report was received by the DACST or what decisions were made. None of my informants was informed why Transformation suddenly stopped, but it may be connected to the fact that Musa Xulu was charged with fraud (Charlotte 2006-04-21). At the present time it is still uncertain what will happen to the museums. My informant Charlotte (2006-04-21) thinks the reshaping of the institutions happened for the sake of change. Thabang (2006-04-04) thinks it is still a good idea to amalgamate in a flagship institution.

The *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* removed the concept of heads of declared cultural institutions,⁵⁰ which the Natal Museum disapproved of (NMAR 1998/1999, 1999/2000). The flagship institution and the National Museum functioned directly under the minister of DACST, but the act made it less possible to influence the minister and communication went through the Board of Trustees, regarded by my informants with mistrust and described by Charlotte (2006-04-21) as hungry for power, politically corrupt and not sharing the objectives of the staff-members and demanding change for the sake of change. In the Natal Museum after 1994 the Board of Trustees became more multicultural and in the Msunduzi Museum (VM), in 1995 and 1998, they enhanced Transformation. Between the management and the Board of Trustees in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) relations were very unstable. They did not trust the museum to transform on its own, and approved or disapproved of research for display until 2003 (Sabelo 2006-04-21).

The *Cultural Laws Second Amendment Act 69 of 2001* further strengthened the concept of the flagship institution and gave the director no voting power in the Board of Trustees. This meant that the Board of Trustees would be able to implement the objectives of DACST, since the trustees were appointed by the minister. The new act entailed a further relocation of power from Whites to a multicultural community represented through the Board of Trustees and complying with the ideological factors of Transformation. This led to a uniform shape of

⁵⁰ Consisting of directors who functioned as an advisory body to the minister.

museums, what the Msunduzi Museum (VM) had feared in 1996, when they argued against stereotype institutions (letter from Pals 1996-06-05).

In 2002 the DACST was split and formed two departments: the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and the Department of Science and Technology. The aim of DAC was to develop and preserve South African culture to ensure social cohesion and nation-building (Vote 14). Culture is a tool in Transformation, by which these objectives could be reached, as under apartheid but now to be multicultural and inclusive. The DAC has therefore the sole responsibility for Transformation of arts, culture and heritage (Vote 14). DAC aims to transform the heritage sector through broader access to institutions, and by improving museum buildings and infrastructure, a process that started in 2002-2003 (Vote 14).⁵¹ As a response to these changes and to circumvent subsidy cutbacks the Natal Museum sought permission in 2003 to be transferred to the Department of Science and Technology.⁵²

The ANC policy (Wilmot 1993) and the Deloitte and Touche (1996) report suggested the establishment of the National Heritage Council (NHC), which came into being under *National Heritage Council Act 25 of 1999*, but was officially constituted in 2004 to develop and promote national heritage, preserve and protect oral memory and focus on living culture (*amasiko*). *Amasiko* refers to the intangible aspects of living culture and may include: cultural tradition, oral history, performance, ritual, popular memory, skills and techniques, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and a holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships. It is about redressing and correcting heritage and history from the previous imbalance and distortion. The NHC focuses on IKS to ensure upliftment as liberation (Vote 14). NHC is a juristic person with a role to protect, develop, promote, reinterpret and reevaluate. It ensures that the objectives of DAC are carried out. According to DAC (Vote 14, www.nhc.org.za) and Corsane (2004: 11) it brought an improvement in the heritage sector. My informant Bill (2006-10-13) was apprehensive of NHC since it served as a middle-man between the museum and DAC, and he suspected that less financial support would be available, that the museum would be isolated from DAC and that the organisation would be difficult to manoeuvre.

⁵¹ The museums can also seek funding from the provincial and local government for events involving local projects.

⁵² At present the Museum can seek funding from both departments. If the Natal museum wanted to have activities that involved music and performance then they could also receive funding from the National Arts Council which is governed under the *National Arts Council Act of 1997* (Bill 2006-10-13).

Very similar to NHC is the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA), which replaced the National Monuments Council. SAHRA was established by the *National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999* and is responsible for nurturing a holistic celebration of heritage, especially *amasiko*, that it wishes to promote on a local level close to the communities (www.sahra.org.za). Corsane (2004: 12) regarded the establishment of SAHRA as a large step forward in opening up the heritage sector. I find that the system establishes yet another committee which the museums have to take into consideration when promoting and displaying heritage. It has benefits, however, as the National Heritage Resources Fund (2001) helps local communities establish projects on history and *amasiko* so that ‘marginalised communities’ can manage, promote and maintain a national estate (Mpumlawana et al 2002: 256-257). There has been no legal instrument of formal policy to conserve *amasiko* in South Africa. SAHRA has therefore embarked on a process to formulate minimum standards and guidelines to protect this cultural expression (Manetsi 2006: 80). In my view, museums know that they must promote *amasiko* but do not know how to. This results in no real effort at individual interpretation because of concerns that it may not be in line with DAC objectives.

In 2002 the Natal Museum developed a Transformation policy for itself to better help it transform to the kind of institution that was demanded. The museum aimed to work for a more compassionate, tolerant and better educated community to actively try to overcome discrimination. The transformation policy puts on paper aims and objectives to ensure that museum management, council and staffs are representative of the community they serve and that the scope of display, collection, education and research is broadening to reflect the cultural diversity of the community (discussion document towards a transformation policy for the Natal Museum 2002). Director Jason Londt was forced to retire in 2003, and has been succeeded by director Luthando Mphasa.⁵³

At the same time the Msunduzi Museum (VM) stated that most museums were battling to survive in inflationary times (VMAR 2002/2003) and that the museum was involved in various endeavours to bring about Transformation in the heritage sector and contribute to the development of the community. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) stated that they strove to attract new audiences through the improvement of service delivery (VMAR 2002/2003). The museum reflected on the task they had undertaken to transform and to welcome all ‘cultural

⁵³ Director from 2003.

groups'. They described the changes as making the museum a community resource for all, rather than a centre of curiosity for a privileged few (VMAR 2002/2003). I suggest that it is at this time that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) embarked on a programme of self-criticism promoted by the new director Sibongiseni Mkhize,⁵⁴ whose ambition was to professionalise the museum. Although the museum was officially opened up to all groups, the inner conflict at the time was described by my informants as being a division along racial and ethnic lines (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14, Anna 2006-04-13). That situation stabilised during Bongani Ndlovu's⁵⁵ directorship and ethnic differences are, in my view, now far removed from the museum.

Since 2004 the cultural portfolio has been handed over to the ANC from the IFP, a result of the declining voting rate in elections. In this connection the Vote 14 was distributed to the museums. The Vote 14 drew up guidelines for national institutions for the period 2006-2009 and aimed at developing culture in society, mainstreaming its role in social development and increasing a broader participation in arts and culture through policy formulation, legislation and funding.⁵⁶ Programmes that are funded by the DAC are mainly outreach programmes as reflected in the work of Mzundusi Museum (VM), which tries to develop the skills of different communities especially in relation to women and to bring learners into the museum.

The transformation budget was implemented to ensure that the museums had the funding to transform themselves. It also provided guidelines and a framework as to what kind of Transformation was expected of museums. The guidelines listed *amasiko* and nation-building as one of the major aspects to address. This was meant to foster a sense of pride and knowledge to encourage mutual respect, create tolerance and intercultural exchange and facilitate the emergence of a shared identity constituted by diversity (the transformation budget guidelines and framework 4-5). The keywords that the guidelines use, focusing on redressing and correcting history from previous imbalance and distortion, are explicitly political. The museums need to comply with this to receive funding. The guidelines also address human resources and their part in transformation such as black economic

⁵⁴ Director of Msundzi Museum between 2002-2004.

⁵⁵ Director from 2004.

⁵⁶ Together with the cultural aspects comes the promotion of the official eleven languages in accordance with the *Pan South African Language Board Act 1995* (vote 14:1). Seen in the light of the social environment in the country one must understand that culture and language have been seen as the same, since people during apartheid were classified not only according to race but also because of language. The act ensures the right of all people and also the linguistic diversity of all people. For the museum this means that it would give people broader access to the information in the museums.

empowerment (BEE) specified in the *Employment Equity Act 19370 of 1998* and community participation has its roots in the RDP. Museums are required, through heritage related activities, to give rise to entrepreneurial opportunities for black-owned enterprises (the transformation budget guidelines and framework 4-5). Transformation therefore envisages greater community consultation and a community-based heritage practitioner. Transformation is about how museums can be used to fulfil the role of Transformation in society at large. It is clear that the government regards museums as instruments in Transformation of the social environment at large.

4.6 What was Transformation?⁵⁷

Transformation is a complex multivocal process that entails freedom of speech and the right to express a self in culture, heritage and history expression and representation. It is about relocating the power of heritage expression from a segregated to a democratic environment. Transformation is, by law, policy and document, officially trying to rid society of segregation and to find aspects of history and heritage that can unite, empower and visualise democratisation. Transformation therefore entails changing the racial outlook of society and is thus perceived as difficult by those previously in power. They express an apprehension that norms and values in society will be completely overthrown. The process is therefore not a simple one but entails several conflicting views. Museologists such as Sullivan (1994: 101), San Roman (1992: 25-31) and Stam (2005: 61) argue that the museum is a reflection of what society regards as important – a source of understanding society and an exploration of identity and fostering social justice. Museums can be regarded as a reflection visualising what society considered as important, what changed and what remained during Transformation. The ideological shift emphasised a multicultural agenda, but has strong African overtones that polarise themselves against a White agenda presented as nationalistic. Nationalism prevails in democracy in various forms and is similar to apartheid in its emphasis on nation-building and the exploration of heritage.

Early Transformation started to break ground in South African society with an inclusive and democratic outlook on social development. The eco-museum built up a new museum structure, and new museology deconstructed and renegotiated the presentation of heritage.

⁵⁷ I have added concluding discussions after each chapter because, due to the complexity of the material, such summaries clarify and bring forth key aspects of content.

Both contributed to the theoretical framework of museum Transformation. Transformation helped the museums to find ways of addressing the other, but not ways of addressing the self in a changing climate. After 1994 Transformation positioned change from a different angle. Previously Transformation had approached change from an academic view, but after 1994 addressed the issue from a political perspective. The new political dispensation wanted to know how the museum could be a resource in the larger Transformation of society. A political shift can be noted in the museums from a stance that represented and strengthened White society to connect holistically with society and work towards a non-discriminatory, non-racial museum where a correction of history and heritage was emphasised. Museums, if they were going to survive, had to be relevant to a democratic social structure.

The eco-museum provided a tool for museums to be in contact with communities, to represent themselves and to deal with socio-political and economic issues. It further promotes skills and beliefs and engenders cultural pride and identity. Omar (2005: 53) argues that South African museums must either accept the premises of the eco-museum or, alternatively, reinvent themselves. The eco-museum concept works well for Transformation, since it aims to integrate economic and social growth as stipulated by the transformation budget guidelines, but continues to rest on a eurocentric museum structure that is a familiar basis to build on. It also works well with African Renaissance which restores, as Snail (1993: 245) argues, the loss of self-confidence instilled by the inferiority complex colonialism created. Transformed museums aim to empower people and the economy by being a part of society at large. As museums were trying to reinvent themselves they had to deconstruct the past and find objectives for Transformation in past and present.

Transformation aims to depart from apartheid and therefore the past and the present have been polarised. It reuses many of the structures, however, like the *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* which was similar to previous legislation. *ACTAG* and the *White Papers* showed many similarities to *MUSA* and the flagship institutions which were constituted in the *Cultural Institution Act 66 of 1989*. The 1996 constitution, however, shows that citizens were officially equal by law. The ideological perspective had also changed, but nationalism prevailed in various forms, and Afrikaner and African nationalism revealed many similarities. It is therefore not a question of a clear-cut paradigm shift from apartheid, but after 1994 museums were expected to contribute to social, economic and democratic developments.

Multiculturalism is one of the most important aspects of museum change, and according to my informant Gustav (2006-11-07), it was when the Board of Trustees was multicultural that Transformation in the Natal Museum was initiated. In 1998 the Msunduzi Museum (VM) Board of Trustees became multicultural. Moreover, it was not dominated by men and started to develop an inclusive museum (Anna 2006-04-13). But my field research has shown that staff-members have explained that they found the Board of Trustees uninterested, that they demanded change for the sake of change, and that they were politically connected and even corrupt – although nothing has been proved nor anyone brought to account. The view of the Board of Trustees could reflect misgivings about the socio-political shift in society at large and dissatisfaction with Transformation in general.

Transformation means changing human resources and, symbolically, the museum director. My informants Bill (2006-04-18) and Charlotte (2006-04-21) at the Natal Museum have argued that the appointment of the recent director was highly political and that the DAC appoints people according to its agenda of Africanising society. At present it is politically correct to have an African male director and a White female assistant director, which covers gender and race equity. My field research has shown that although the institutions are supposed to be gender-equal, African men have a tendency to mistrust and dominate female colleagues, especially African females.

My field research has shown that for any person appointed at the museums, not being White was a challenge during Transformation. My informant Lindiwe (2006-04-21) explained that she suddenly found herself representing all Africans in South Africa before very curious White staff-members. Among other staff-members there was a feeling of not being trusted or competent enough (Thabang 2006-04-04). One of my informants told me that his biggest challenge was to make staff understand that ‘I am black I am professional and would treat them equally regardless of their racial background’ (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14). The apprehension of Transformation, as I interpret it, was that it would overthrow what the museums had over a long time achieved and built up, especially in the Msunduzi Museum (VM), because it had been run like a family for a long time (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14). Director Mkhize said to *The Echo*: ‘I’m not to destroy [sic] what foundation has already been laid, but to consolidate what’s there’ (Olifant 2003-09-23).

There were no objections to the appointment of an African director in the Msunduzi Museum (VM), not even by the Afrikaans media (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14), nor to a similar appointment at the Natal Museum. Although the appointment of multicultural staff was expected and believed to be necessary there was growing dissatisfaction in the Natal Museum with BEE. My field research has indicated that there is a common assumption that it is not the person with the right qualifications that is appointed to a position, but the person of the right race. I have also come across the assumption that a person has to be politically connected to receive higher positions in the museums, such as a directorship. Other informants have expressed that the multicultural working environment has brought new perspectives and understanding of the presentation of heritage and of society at large (Margareta 2006-10-11). There are discrepancies in what Transformation meant for the working environment. For one of my informants the multicultural working environment entailed that 'The museum was no longer a foreign space in the eyes of many African people in Pietermaritzburg' (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14). The multicultural staff en-raced the Msunduzi Museum and made it a heritage embassy for a united South Africa rather than a diverse and segregated place. Transformation aimed to protect previous heritage expressions, 'correct' them and promote new using methods such as *amasiko* and IKS. This was facilitated by the transformation budget, the NHC and SAHRA to ensure a holistic, non-racial and democratic outlook on heritage.

I have shown in this chapter that it is necessary to investigate museum structures over time to achieve a holistic understanding of past development that led up to Transformation in the museum. When analysing museums in a long temporal sequence, it is possible to compare differences and similarities in structure. Transformation wishes to present itself as a paradigm shift from apartheid, but the ideological approach uses similar concepts to manifest national unity. The similarities are crucial to acknowledge because they facilitate the realisation that constant diversification and polarisation between past and present and between groups cannot continue in the building of a strong and united heritage in South Africa.

CHAPTER 5. CONTESTED PLACE AND CONTESTED MUSEUMS

In new museology, well anchored in the post-structural theoretical frame, a museum is a contested place. This chapter will analyse the Natal and Msunduzi Museums as contested places and how Transformation aimed to alter the associated meaning. Cresswell (2004: 11-12), Giddens (1979: 102-113), Darby (2000: 15) and Pred (1986: 11) argue that place is invested with power, and is related to how human agency produces and reproduces social life and knowledge. The museum's location in the urban landscape and name will be analysed in terms of socio-political structures. I shall also consider how different groups at different periods have understood and narrated the places, celebrated by some but contested by others. This will allow my reader a nuanced picture of Transformation.

Transforming museums is about changing the associated meaning of the place. Drawing on Pred (1986: 22) I hold that it is inseparable from the 'becoming' of a place and can reveal changing, recurring and multiple meanings of Transformation. When change happens in society spatial premises are also changed. Observation of this is only possible if scrutinised in a long temporal sequence.⁵⁸ Transformation is connected to the execution of power, and the 'becoming' of a place is dependent on power relations. A place is therefore contested vis-à-vis the way in which power is deployed. South African museums have been perceived as reflections of White interest and as White places. Stuckenberg argues (1987: 249) that Africans regarded museums as containing nothing significant to them; they therefore saw museums as not relevant. Hence the image of the museum was difficult to change. Museums tried to actively change this attitude and perception and to make themselves multicultural. The museums are slowly achieving what Mlondi (2006-09-14) intended: 'The museum was no longer a foreign space in the eyes of many African people in Pietermaritzburg'.

5.1 Museums in the urban landscape

Darby (2000: 9) claims that landscape analysis provides a way to question cultural production, cultural values and the construction of culture in relation to myths. Weiner (2000: 386) explains that myths are explanations of origin, as confirmed, supported and maintained by the social state of affairs. The perception of landscape is bound, according to Darby (2000:

⁵⁸ This is equal to Pred's (1986: 195) term 'biography'.

9), with how the individual perceives the self and the other especially visible in social change. I argue that it is essential for Transformation how ‘cultural groups’ act differently in connection with the museum as a place located in the urban landscape. Cosgrove (1985) and Cosgrove and Daniels (1988: 1) hold that there are many ways of seeing the landscape since there is a relationship between a symbolic landscape and social formations that can be read through architecture. Spencer (2000: 535) holds that symbols are systems of meaning that can be decoded or interpreted. Sacks (1986: 2) argues that landscape is socially constructed and is connected to how people use the land. Sacks’ argument becomes explicit when investigating the racial zoning of Pietermaritzburg during the colonial and apartheid eras and how that contributed to the different meaning associated with the museums. I argue that there is a reciprocal relationship between peoples’ perception and the praxis of urban landscape in relation to museums.

The museum’s location in the urban landscape is essential for investigating Transformation. In 1838 Pietermaritzburg was established by Whites, and its museums were incorporated into the urban landscape in 1904 and 1912. Following Hill (2005: 20), I claim that the museums could be considered a way in which the (White) urban population improved the urban society. The Natal Museum was erected in Loop Street.⁵⁹ The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was erected at the corner of Church Street and Voortrekker Street, but it now consists of a large area with several buildings between Church Street and Langalibalele Street and has incorporated Voortrekker Street into its premises.⁶⁰

British imperial forces annexed the Boer Republic of Natalia shortly after Pietermaritzburg was founded and became a colonial town (Haswell 1988: 24-27, Willis 1988: 33, 1994: 283-310). White residents established themselves in the town and the African workers ‘found’ housing on the outskirts of the city (Willis 1988: 35). The Hindu Indians settled in the town in the 1860s. By the 1890s the lower part of Church Street and Longmarket Street⁶¹ had become an Indian-dominated area and by the 1880s the upper end of Church Street had become a Muslim Indian area. From 1905 the town developed into segregated and mixed areas outside the town centre where enclaves of Indian, White and Coloured families settled (Willis 1988: 35, 40, 1994: 283-310). Already at an early stage in Pietermaritzburg’s history, drawing on

⁵⁹ Now Jabu Ndlovu Street.

⁶⁰ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

⁶¹ Now Langalibalele Street.

Hall (2003: 32), it is possible to recognise that there were multiple meanings given to the urban landscape by different groups.

Multiple meanings are essential for the understanding of Transformation. During the colonial and Victorian period the museums were established in areas that were racially mixed. The urban landscape, however, became increasingly segregated during apartheid. The urban landscape and its mental and physical racial borders were not as closed a system as they seemed to be, but an intricate matter of memory, associations and socio-political structures lived and upheld by all groups of society. An example of changing associations is the Natal Museum, which according to Stuckenberg (1988: 160), had always been open to all races. Yet the African presence awoke comments. Both Brooks (2005: 18-19) and Stuckenberg (1988: 160) point out that there were objections to banning Africans from the museum, but they disagree on who made the objection.⁶² Brooks (2005: 18-19) states that in a letter director Ernest Warren⁶³ ordered that an African attendant should ensure that Africans did not crowd around display cases, which might cause inconvenience. Brooks' observation implies at least two things: Africans attended the museum and were interested in it. I claim, relying on the Natal Museum Annual Reports, that the museum was not exclusively a White place. Africans worked there and both Indians and Africans visited frequently. Coloureds are not mentioned in the early Annual Reports, and little is known about their relation to the museum. Yet the museum was primarily established for and used by Whites. Africans, Coloureds and Indians did not have ownership of it but were not excluded as visitors.

Willis (1988: 40-41) contends that the social distance between racial groups was a result of physical racial segregation. Africans were temporary 'visitors' in the White city and the *Native (Urban Areas) Act 1923* and its 1937 amendment situated African residential areas at a distance from the city.⁶⁴ This meant that the museums operated in a White urban landscape. Between 1910-1946 a strong anti-Asiatic aggregation in (KwaZulu) Natal resulted in voluntary segregation. The *Restriction Act 1943* demarcated areas occupied by Indians. This act was followed in 1946 by the *Asiatic Land Tenure and Representation Act 1946* which placed absolute limits on territory occupied by Indians and resulted in hostility between

⁶² Stuckenberg (1988: 160) suggested that it was the Board of Trustees who objected to the banning, whereas Brooks (2005: 18-19) suggested that it was the Board of Trustees who proposed the banning but that this was rejected by Director Ernest Warren.

⁶³ Director in the Natal Museum 1904-1931.

⁶⁴ Africans were granted own areas in, e.g., Sobantu village.

Whites and Indians (Willis 1988: 38-41). As Africans, Indians and Coloureds were seen as temporary visitors in the town they were also regarded as temporary visitors in the museums. This racial segregation determined the relationship to the museums and the urban landscape. Willis (1988: 38-39) holds that racial segregation existed largely in all towns in South Africa at the time when the NP won the election in 1948.

The urban landscape in which the museums existed was at this point a lived experience filled with cultural meanings and symbols of segregation. The museums became increasingly associated with Whites, since the museum came to exist in a racially divided and segregated urban landscape. Willis (1988: 40-41) holds that after the *Group Areas Act 1950* cities were divided into racially exclusive zones, which in turn were separated by buffer zones. Webb (1994: 20) holds that as the act was implemented museums ignored the fact that 'black people' existed in towns. Dodgshon (1987: 67) and Robertson and Richards (2003: 4) suggest that the relation of different groups to power and control established exclusive rights of access and use; this reproduction of power contributes to the meaning given to place and the urban landscape. Pred (1984: 280, 291-292, 1986: 19-22) and Harvey (1996: 316) argue similarly that the placement of practice, social structure and power 'become' each other. The conflicting meanings were part of how the urban landscape was regarded and were connected to the issue of democratic rights and belonging.

By law Pietermaritzburg continued to be a segregated town until the late 1980s when the *Pass Law 1952*⁶⁵ and later the *Group Areas Act 1950*⁶⁶ were repealed, but the urban landscape remained divided along racial lines. During the 1980s-1990s the town started to become less of a White area as the White population moved to newly established suburbs. In the 1990s the townships surrounding Pietermaritzburg started to merge with the White urban landscape. Part of the development was the internecine war between 'black communities' that devastated Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu and Natal in 1984-1994. This was a result of conflicts between political parties such as UDF,⁶⁷ ANC and Inkatha that controlled different areas in the Pietermaritzburg surrounds. In late 1987 and early 1988 violence broke out in Vulindlela valley, in 1990 the IFP took control of most of the areas, and the UDF-supporting youth fled to the township of Edendale (Levine 1999: 109, Taylor & Mark 1994: 35). The tension in

⁶⁵ In use between 1952-1986.

⁶⁶ In use between 1950-1991.

⁶⁷ United Democratic Front.

Vulindlela valley between the ANC and IFP increased when Mandela was released and the ANC was unbanned. People were killed, houses were destroyed and thousands took to flight (Levine 1999: 9-12, 109).

The Natal Museum noted how Pietermaritzburg started to merge with the townships and how the unrest in the communities led to 64% fewer visitors (NMAR 1991/1992). The museum was fully aware of its surrounding community's violence and hardship, since the staff engaged in an educational programme in Edendale and the museum was situated next to the police station where demonstrations and protest were held (NMAR 1992/1993). The Natal Museum tried to function as an educational resource and showed an awareness of the socio-political environment. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) did not comment on or document any reaction to the socio-political environment in Annual Reports or minutes, either because they did not find it necessary for the work in the museum or because they thought that comment was unnecessary. Since the museum did not make any comments it must be regarded as a place foregrounding White interests.

In today's democratic Pietermaritzburg, the location of the museums in the city centre is far from the hub of life and the town is regarded as unsafe due to crime. The Natal Museum is located next to the police station while the Msunduzi Museum is located next to Langalibalele Street and an expanding taxi/minibus rank. While I have experienced no incidents walking in this area, it has been described to me as a 'no go' area for and by Whites and has become predominantly black. Shopping malls and other activities in the suburbs are the centre of life for Africans, Indians, Coloureds and Whites. The museums are thus located at a distance from the majority of the population, and for visitors to reach the museums they need transport either from the townships or from the suburbs. Yet both museums are located close to the taxi/minibus ranks, so once commuters are in town the museums are easy to reach. The museums function today mainly as an educational resource, but those who need them the most stay furthest away from them. Although the urban landscape has changed character the museums are still predominantly perceived as a White enclave.

5.2 The Natal Museum – an anglophile monument?

The Natal Museum was established in 1904 after the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902), possibly representing English political dominance over Afrikaners and Africans. The museum was the

first in the British colony of Natal and could, as Sheets-Pyenson (1988: 12) describes other colonial museums, have been a symbol of triumph over emotional, physical and moral forces that were seen to stand against it. The museum was established close to an English upper-class area in Pietermaritzburg (Spencer 1988: 77) and was built in a Flemish Renaissance style (Stuckenberg 1988: 260). The area where it is situated still has a lot of its colonial features. Rapoport (1994: 460) suggests that the 'built environment' constructed by one group can be considered strange, unfamiliar and even chaotic by others. The architecture of the Natal Museum implies that it was not an African structure but is imported by colonialism. Architecture connected to colonialism is today regarded as communicating values such as deprivation of rights, violence and racism and has therefore received a negative connotation. If the museum architecture reflects these aspects then, drawing on Thiis-Evensen (1998: 5), I hold that it could limit actions and reactions and have consequences for how people act and narrate meaning; the museum architecture therefore organises the visitor's experience of the place.

From its inception the museum aimed to respond to and reflect White needs in terms of function and appearance. Drawing on Stuckenberg (1988: 160) I argue that the museum arose from a desire to maintain White European anglophile cultural standards in a highly isolated, fairly recently established town. Stuckenberg (1988: 160) holds that the museum was promoting the colony's economic development, making its natural resources better known and utilised. Brooks (1988: 61, 2005: 1-2) agrees with Stuckenberg but criticises the intentions of the museum. She argues that when the colonial powers conquered Zululand, Ernest Warren forged the museum and the colonial administration with his collection activities. Both arguments suggest in their own way how the museum was intrinsically connected to the colonial government.⁶⁸ The museum reflected socio-political realities which were narrated through the meaning of the place. This means that when the government was subjugating people with legislation, the museum, as a governmental body, became connected to that activity.

Roberts (2004: 222), Cameron (2004: 76), Harrison (2005: 39) and Duncan and Wallach (2003: 483) have shown that museum architecture can be imposing and that people experience it differently, depending on their race, class and gender, and that they therefore construct its

⁶⁸ Since they argue from two different political perspectives, however, they highlight the fact differently.

meaning differently. It is thus not atypical that the museum was regarded as a White enclave in the African landscape under British colonial statues and that it became connected to those who benefitted from the colonial system which oppressed other groups. Cresswell (2004: 1) holds that place as a concept suggests ownership. It is therefore essential for the understanding of Transformation that the associated meaning of the museum was narrated as belonging to Whites and excluded Africans, Indians and Coloureds.

In the *Du Toit Report* the colonial features of the museum were challenged. The report describes the museum as 'gloomy' and states that it should be relocated to a new building, since it has none of the attributes required by the commission (Du Toit 1949: 148). Museums erected during the colonial period had already acquired another meaning quite different from the one originally intended. Palatial buildings were already contested in the 1940s and did not follow the government idea of what museums should communicate. This is something that contemporary South African museological writing has overlooked in its reliance on a new museology for analysing museums. Museological discourse during Transformation has wrongly equated colonial-style museums with apartheid-style museums. Museums erected during the colonial period are currently used as symbols and rhetorical tools for visualising White dominance and oppression during colonialism and apartheid. The buildings now function as narrating memories that invoke inferiority or a sense of grandiosity. Overall my informants generally held that the museum was an oppressive symbol especially intimidating to African visitors. I suggest that their impression is not necessarily true, but that it reflects their perception of the museum as grandiose. Their relationship to the museum reflects their perception of Whites as ostentatious, either because they want to oppose it or to associate with it.

Museums became more racially constrained with the *State-aided Institution Amendment Act 46 of 1957*. They became a spatial reflection of apartheid and this made it difficult for them to function in a multicultural society. One year later in 1958, a new wing was added to the Natal Museum. It was built, according to Stuckenberg (1988: 161), to provide better accommodation for staff-members, displays and collections. The new wing can be associated with segregation laws, the emerging of the Republic of South Africa, political freedom from the commonwealth, and strengthening of eurocentric ideas. Following Thiis-Evensen (1998: 6) and Ristarp (2002: 50-56), I claim that socio-political power here revealed and manifested itself architecturally by using specific elements in the building that showed the intellectual

and social changes in society. Narratives about the museum use the architecture to help associate meaning with the place. The buildings erected during colonial and apartheid times represent different temporalities; both are highly monumental and together increase the symbolism of oppression because of the associated socio-political meanings of colonialism and apartheid.

Ristarp (2002: 50-56) suggests that the external shape of an official building does not necessarily reveal the interior of the structure, but shows how the institution perceives itself. I hold that the alteration of the Natal Museum architecture was a symbol of change in society. Further visible in the 1980s when social change revealed itself was the notice board put up in front of the museum with opening hours written in Zulu and a new Zulu word invented for museum: *eMnyuziyemu* (*The Natal Witness* 1981-09-08, Nigel 2006-04-11). This without doubt shows the museum's concern with altering the place to attract African visitors long before Transformation demanded it. Other alterations to attract visitors were the large modelled insects added in 2000 (*The Natal Witness* 2000-08-08). The models decolonise the facade, make it more appealing to children, and are thus in line with the educational work of the museum.

The Natal Museum's outer and inner architecture complement each other and form an inseparable unity connected to the eurocentric production of empirical scientific knowledge. Transformation ideals have connected this with something negative, as not African enough, and have tried to come up with ideals to challenge it, e.g., the concept of IKS which is experienced as something utterly African. The Natal Museum was originally organised as an English natural history museum with narrow balconies to provide natural lighting for displays. Bennet (1995) argues that such architecture provided for a eurocentric evolutionary taxonomic classification of the objects on display. I suggest that this was inscribed in the museum as a place by the construction of displays and visitation following the architecture.

Drawing on Hirst (2003: 380) and Ehn and Löfgren (2001: 48-49), I suggest that the eurocentric evolutionary taxonomy that the architecture stipulated could as a last resort be regarded as a reflection of how the White Victorian bourgeoisie perceived themselves as the pinnacle of civilisation and other people as underdeveloped. In the Victorian era people were infatuated with borderlines and order (Ehn & Löfgren 2001: 48-51), which affected the way other cultures were perceived in museums. The architecture in the museum could therefore be

seen as reinforcing conceptualised boundaries between people and time and as organising them spatially into fields that could be controlled. Yates (1989: 249-262) writes that the taxonomical principle of science underlines the provision of culture in the museum. Both the inner and outer architecture communicate ideas of eurocentric scientific knowledge. The curator was constrained by, or could execute control over, the knowledge production using the architecture as a tool. Radley (1991: 69) argues that the museum building is not just a container but a connective tissue, e.g., for displays. I argue that architecture and displays in the museum, both past and present, lived a symbiotic relationship. During Transformation eurocentrism came to be regarded as pejorative and stands in contrast to democratic values, African heritage and IKS.

The museum became part of the cultural and socio-political order of society which was produced, mediated, acted on and physically manifested and maintained. The place and architecture manifested ideas of what was civilised and what was not, what was order and chaos. In the context of Pietermaritzburg the museum could be regarded as a cultural extension of 'European' culture and a physical reaffirmation of eurocentric values. This expression came to be modified and was acted out as a South African expression of museum culture with strong anglophile overtones. This was in turn contested during Transformation because it was seen to represent only White interests, although it was used by a multicultural audience. At present the museums are therefore trying to reconsider how to express science in multicultural ways to comply with political ideals.

The museum's architecture can be connected to Yanni's (1999: 114) perception of the museum as participating in an act of looking and therefore reflecting eurocentrism. Since eurocentrism has been given the foregoing negative connotation, the architecture could be perceived as justifying power and privileges for Whites on the grounds that they were culturally more evolved and more civilised than Africans, something that MacDonald (2006: 107) argues that the ANC regarded as racism. Eurocentric ideas of others were founded on these values and the museum spatialised and normalised this through eurocentric classifications. This became inscribed in the visitor's bodily movement following the architectural stipulation of evolutionary taxonomic ideas. This provided an understanding and construction of time sequences and science made by all 'cultural groups'. The idea of eurocentrism, originally part of a White space, was therefore performed and maintained by anyone visiting the museum and became a lived experience.

The architecture offers a mechanism for inscribing time and the self into the museum. Whites inscribed themselves physically and so did all other 'cultural groups' through their visitation and bodily movement. Leach (2005: 308) claims that inscribing oneself to the place may facilitate a form of identification, may engender a sense of belonging and has an important social role. Recalling Brooks (1988, 2005) and Stuckenberg (1988) on colonial administration, I suggest that when all 'cultural groups' were visiting the museum they participated in the expansion of the British Empire and spatialised the role of the empire in knowledge production. The museum was symbolically connected to administrative institutions that were powerful structures of an oppressive era which all 'cultural groups' affirmed and, later in the 1990s, profoundly questioned.

Architecture contributes to the construction of knowledge (Yanni 1999: 3), something that in a South African context is explicit when dealing with the place in colonial, apartheid and present-day political dispensation. The alteration of place, e.g., by architecture, contributes to the construction and change of knowledge production over time. The place evolves through the agents and visitors acting 'in' time and acting out eurocentrism. Yanni (1999: 12) ascribes to museums multiple identities and different audiences. This affects the perception of the building and I hold that the pre-understanding and ability of visitors and agents to question knowledge production are crucial factors for Transformation. Concepts of colonialism and eurocentrism do not necessarily need to be juxtaposed to Transformation, but they can be used in multiculturalism to construct a South African museum expression. To do this the museums need to look beyond the political dichotomy of past and present.

In the new wing (1958) the Natal Museum was divided into intimate smaller display halls that altered the evolutionary feature. In the old building, displays continued to be shown in shallow display cases along the walls, but the new wing featured three-dimensional installations. The 'grand archive of the colony' was changed to an emotional connection to White heritage visualised architecturally in intimate spaces. New ideas and means of using the place for display purposes reveal new expressions of culture, history and heritage. The new wing connected to segregation, White domination and an understanding of society manifested in intimate spaces. The spatial organisation of the museum was a materialisation of racial politics creating exclusive White zones. The new wing connected to a feeling of belonging for Whites manifested in the sentiments of eurocentrism.

In every case architecture, display and material culture work as a unity presenting knowledge and 'facts' to visitors that seem to be undisputed. The museum shows traces of different knowledge productions possible to detect through analysing architecture, and also displays components that are important for the analysis of Transformation. The new wing became a White space in terms of display, a celebration of the self, and part of an attempt to create an exclusive unity in the 1960s and 1970s. This created a spatial difference between White and African heritage. The museum separated heritage in different areas which was a physical reflection and manifestation of apartheid ideals of separate development. The museum further changed its inner architecture in the 1990s by extending the floors of the balconies and repainting the interior. In the eyes of my informant Steph (2006-04-04), the museum became less like a mausoleum. My field research has shown that, despite the alterations, the architecture traditions still stipulate how displays are constructed and how they are visited.

In the museum the original architecture has come to be a prescribed path that the visitor has followed and still follows through the museum along the walls where the balconies were previously situated. When doing fieldwork in the museum I noted visitors doing exactly this to get a quick glimpse of science and culture. This ritualised way of visiting the museum continues to be performed; it is acted out either through visitation or constructing displays. It is eurocentric, but since it has been performed by all 'cultural groups' in the past and the present, it becomes an en-cultured perception and understanding of science and culture. Eurocentrism is never static, but is subject to how it is acted out in relation to place, space and time; this transmits different meaning when activated and performed. The originally intended eurocentrism is therefore not the same as the current lived and experienced eurocentrism.

The eurocentric architecture of local museums, although built and used in the South African context, was regarded as alien and juxtaposed Transformation. An investigation of the Natal Museum reveals traces of spatial organisations of science, norms, politics and development. Radley's (1991: 69) argument that the museum is a connective tissue becomes explicit in my informants' articulation of how architecture and displays influence each other. David (2006-04-24)⁶⁹ and Steph (2006-04-04)⁷⁰ explained that the building stipulated the design of the display and should imitate the architecture because the display was linked to the architecture

⁶⁹ Working in the Msunduzi Museum.

⁷⁰ He worked in both the Natal and Msunduzi Museums.

and there was a need for the building and the display to work together as a unity. The displays in this assessment become related to the building and add meaning to the place.⁷¹ Steph (2006-04-04) also explained that a Zulu-style exhibition would not work in a colonial building. The demands on the appearance of a Zulu-style exhibition were experienced by him as multi-coloured, of rough material and tactile. The way he reasoned reveals how places and styles, belonging to different 'cultural groups', are juxtaposed to each other. Cultural expressions were experienced as one way or the other, never as multicultural.

The use of architecture shows how symbols and space were created and manipulated, altered and maintained over time. Time fundamentally changed how the place was interpreted. In the beginning eurocentrism represented a positive explanation of the world, but at present it represents oppression. Transformation has emphasised a break with eurocentrism as a norm for classification, but there are very few or no actual alternatives. IKS is intended to replace eurocentrism, but is too vague in its definition and has no capability to alter centuries of epistemology.

Ntsoane (2002: 2) holds that IKS can help the museum to reconcile with the past, but I hold that IKS positions the museum in an 'in-between space' of two systems. DAC uses IKS as a rhetorical tool in academic and political discourses to visualise inequalities, abolish eurocentrism and propagate against White domination. On the other hand DAC wants to use eurocentric resources as an educational tool for the previously disadvantaged, yet aspires at the same time to rid the heritage sector completely of eurocentrism. IKS cannot alter the physical realm of the museum because it gives no alternative suggestions to build up an indigenous architecture that can replace eurocentric science. IKS is therefore not constructive but deconstructive. Before IKS was suggested the new wing provided for a clear break with Victorian architecture. The museum's interior architecture featured less monumental rooms than the older building and the evolutionary way of experiencing culture was being removed.

5.2.1 Transforming the Natal Museum

Towards the end of apartheid in the 1980s museums functioned within an overall racially exclusive framework. An example of this is the multiracial children's group between the ages

⁷¹ This shows how the evolutionary classification system stipulated the way in which museums and displays were to be visited.

of three and six which was turned away from a film show in the Natal Museum. The organisation hosting the function did not have a permit from the Department of Community Development for Africans to attend the function, only for Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The Natal Museum was always open to all groups, but the lecture theatre where the film was shown was legally restricted by the authorities (*The Natal Witness* 1980-10-15). The museum could not at this time act autonomously from the structures under which it functioned. The structural restrictions spatialised issues of belonging and power and made them tangible. My informants spoke with condemnation and regret about this (Ada 2006-03-21, Nigel 2006-04-11), but since the decision was in the hands of the authorities there was little the museum could do. This envisages the bureaucracy under which the museum operated and which they wanted to break away from. During the 1980s the museum applied for permission from the Department of National Education to remove the non-white/whites signs above the toilets. They were never granted written approval for this, but made an oral agreement and promised not to make a statement about it. When granted the go-ahead they renovated the toilets, which were in a poor state of repair, so that they would all have the same standard and would make visitors feel that they were all equal (Ada 2006-03-21, Nigel 2006-04-11). These are important alterations and initiated a quest by the museum to become more applicable to a broader spectrum of society. These initiatives from staff-members started a journey for the museum to improve, create and negotiate a multicultural place.

Central to Transformation is the discussion and attempt to change the meaning associated with museums among those who are unaware of their existence and relevance in order to attract a new audience. This has been resolved by different strategies. During the late 1980s the Natal Museum tried to resolve its physical constraints and to change its meaning, orchestrated by the education department's work with township learners. The museum initiated a process of bringing children from Edendale into the museum and exposing them to the displays and collections. Educational officers pointed out that the museum was now the children's place. These children narrated and acted out new meanings and transformed the concept of the museum.

My informants Ada (2006-03-21) and Nigel (2006-04-11) held that the museum building was intimidating to Africans. Others thought that it was not, and that African children got a 'wow' feeling visiting the museum for the first time (Lindiwe 2006-04-10). The discrepancy between my informants shows the multiple associations that agents have. Lindiwe's (2006-04-10)

expression about African children's perception of the place deconstructs the assumption that the place is an imposing symbol of oppression to them. The meaning of museums must be considered, narrated and acted on to be experienced; a meaning does not exist on its own but in relation to the agent's actions 'in' time. If symbols of oppression were not narrated to African children they could not act on this meaning and therefore the museum would not be a symbol of oppression to them.

Transformation cannot be regarded only in relation to the physical aspects of the museum, but must also be seen in relation to the agents. The education department's work with children in Edendale extended the sense of place beyond its physical premises, and the agent's activities became part of the meaning of the museum. The museum is therefore not just a physical place, but is the activities acted out at, or in relation to, the place by agents. The people that use and are associated with the place become important; therefore associating the museum with one group, or changing its composition, e.g., with staff members from different 'cultural groups', alters how the museum is perceived. A multicultural workforce has come to imply that the museum is multicultural and democratic, which in turn changes how the physical premises of the museum are perceived, acted on and narrated. Transformation therefore relies heavily on who is employed in the museum.

A building erected and narrated as a monumental symbol of White colonialism, apartheid and western scientific knowledge is difficult to transform. In 1992 the Natal Museum held discussion groups to investigate how to make the museum more welcoming (Working Group 1 1992: 2-3). The aim was to encourage people who would normally not visit the museum, but the physical location in the urban landscape was impossible to transform unless the museum moved to a completely new building. Due to previous racial zoning people were constrained from visiting the museum, and transport and economic limitation dislocated the museum from those who needed it the most as an educational resource.

People recognise and collectively maintain certain places that express socio-cultural identity (Knapp & Aschmore 1999: 14-15). Places are the connected cultural constructions of society and the myths that society rests upon (Shields 1991: 6). To fully understand Transformation one must understand the meaning of the museum as a place. Museums located in the urban landscape were narrated as symbols of oppression mainly by Whites. This was expressed within the group and to other groups because it had significance to Whites; it expressed both

the positive and negative sides of White dominance. The museum was physical evidence of achievement and belonging for Whites. To other groups this was associated with exclusion. Narrations have to be acted out within and between groups to be understood and maintained. Therefore all 'cultural groups' were responsible for narrating and maintaining the museum as a symbol of oppression.

Multiple meanings form part of the understanding of museums and Shields (1991: 7) holds that the conception of place is central to one's conception of self and of one's reality. Pred (1984: 279) argues that place always involves an appropriation and transformation of space that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society, time and space. Museums are inseparable from socio-political structures which could only be altered when democracy was achieved and all people were legally equal; then the museum could be equally shared and mediated. The advocates of Transformation wanted to continue to use the museum but also to break with its eurocentric meaning; they constructed an ambivalent position for the museum because they continued to use and criticise the place at the same time.

The meaning of the museum is not static, though treated as such, but is subject to temporal shift. In line with Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003: 1), I claim that time affected the behaviour of the visitor. Visitors perform a ritual when visiting, and bodily actions are joined with socio-political structures and affect the narrations of the place. The visitors act out in words and movements the meaning which they associate with the place. The museum, through entrenched thinking and repetitive rhetoric in government speeches, became associated with apartheid and was locked 'in' that time. If not actively altered by both agents and visitors, it will continue to exist 'in' apartheid time. The narrative of museums alters slowly, as structures and time change, and it therefore receives extended and conflicting meanings.

The advocates of Transformation cannot change how the museum is perceived as long as they lock it in a discourse of subjugation and witness to it as evidence of White domination. Such racial block-thinking entrenches the separation between the 'cultural groups'. If all South African physical manifestations are embraced as part of a complex historical legacy, it will form a united South African heritage. It is not the physical building itself that discriminates people; it is the system in which the building functioned. The people living within the system apply meaning to the place and it becomes contested. Changing the meaning of the place

means changing the perception of the people and their perception of other cultures, whoever the people might be.

5.3 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex

The museum has a long and intricate spatial development and has changed its name which is crucial for the understanding of Transformation.⁷² Olifant (2003-09-25)⁷³ states that many people regarded the museum as ‘a bastion of Afrikanerdom and a symbol of oppression’. While her contention is a simplified version of a complex heritage landscape, her statement fulfills a socio-political function from which one can begin to deconstruct the meaning of the museum. Below follows an investigation and analysis of the museum’s development in terms of location, buildings and satellite museums showing how the process reveals different aspects of heritage negotiations.

The plans for a Voortrekker Museum started in 1908 when a commission was appointed to investigate whether the Church of Vow could be restored and to hold a collection. Director Pols (1988: 163-164) describes this event as reinstating the church to the (White) ‘people of South Africa’ as a permanent memorial. In the same year as the promulgation of the Union of South Africa (1910), the building was bought and restored by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) (Labuschagne 1988: 28). When the plans for a Voortrekker Museum were initiated the socio-political climate was unstable with intensified segregation and African uprisings, e.g., the Bambatha rebellion of 1906.

The former Boer Republics were given responsible government in 1907 and, at the same time, Afrikaners openly rejected anglophile heritage and politics. Hence their underlying inferiority complex over British imperialism which gave rise to Afrikaner nationalism. The DRC was involved in politics, during and after the Anglo-Boer war, and strongly opposed British imperialism. In 1907-1911 Afrikaners made heavy political investments in aspects of language and culture, and the DRC was instrumental from 1905 in an attempt to unite White Afrikaners. In 1910 politicians regarded churches as the most important institutions in Afrikaner communities (Giliomee 2003: 359-384).

⁷² See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

⁷³ She refers to the museum as the Voortrekker Museum, the name under which it was known at the time when the article was written.

Meiring (1999: 20) suggests that the DRC arose as a church for Afrikaans language and heritage, and later came to be regarded as the nationalist church, or the 'National Party at prayer'. Delmont (1993: 101) and Meiring (1999: 20) hold that the church, in Afrikaner nationalist propaganda, represented Christianity as a moral base that validated patriarchal power relations, power over Africans, the possession of land and the theological infrastructure of apartheid. The church was also a religious place for the advocates of apartheid who were regarded as upholding the structures of inequality.

I contend that the museum established by the DRC within this socio-political and ideological framework was an active implementation to reject anglophile heritage and further promote Afrikaner heritage. The relation to the church also emphasised the prevalence of Christian beliefs which is important for an understanding of the place. Archival material shows that the museum was managed by and belonged to the DRC. Church members served on the Board of Trustees, and the museum and the church shared offices. It was only in the 1980s that this changed. This reinforces the strong cultural and political affiliations of the place which were contested during Transformation and needed to be deconstructed. These political circumstances are, however, similar to the ones prevailing during Transformation. Kindred aspects were used to promote heritage, but within an African political space, rejecting Afrikaner/White political ideals.

The museum was handed over to the government on the day it opened as the 'Voortrekker Museum',⁷⁴ on 16th December 1912, to commemorate the battle of Blood River (1838) (letter from Jansen 1912-01-29, Du Toit 1949: 52-53, Pols 1988: 163-164). The narratives of the battle at Blood River are essential for understanding the meaning of the museum. They are connected to Afrikaner history and mythology, which in turn is strongly connected to the right to own land in South Africa. The museum as a place materialised as a manifestation of the Afrikaner's right to exist in South Africa in the past and the present. It situates layers of history, struggle and narrative at one particular location. The Church of Vow constituted a highly significant symbol for Afrikaner heritage that has been present in the mental and urban landscape for almost 100 years. My informant Marie (2006-03-10) explained that the curator

⁷⁴ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

of the Voortrekker Complex⁷⁵ is currently regarded by Afrikaners as someone playing a vital role in 'the Afrikaner community' as a custodian of something 'very holy to them'.

The Great Trek, which constitutes identities and a myth of origin for Afrikaners, is related to the understanding of the museum. I will here present a simplified version of the part that concerns the Msunduzi Museum. The Great Trek can be described as the journey of Dutch-speaking farmers, in rejection of British imperialism, from the Cape to the interior in the 1830s. Later these people were collectively, if erroneously, classified as the Voortrekkers, resulting in a mythical ethnic identity. The Voortrekkers wanted the right to settle and use land in the interior and they encountered and clashed with various African groups, e.g., with Zulus at Blood River.

The battle of Blood River took place in 1838 at the river iNcome where 468 Voortrekkers fought thousands of Zulu warriors and won (Oosthuizen undated: 2, Pols 1988: 163-164). Before the battle the Voortrekker men made a vow, promising that they would acknowledge the supremacy of God if they won the battle. Their promise was realised in the Church of Vow in Pietermaritzburg, consecrated in 1840. The church was subsequently regarded by Afrikaners and my informants as the direct result of the covenant that the Voortrekkers made with God. My informant Gert (2006-04-28) said that the place should be kept and celebrated not just for Afrikaners but also for Africans. I view this as his way of reinterpreting the place, from an exclusive White domain and representation of history, to an area that could symbolise meetings between groups rather than a conflict between two groups. Gert (2006-04-28) argued that the place needed to be reinterpreted to become a place where people could commit themselves to reconciliation and remember the past.

A reinterpretation of the past requires a rewriting of history, since the myth about the Church of Vow and Blood River has been nurtured for over 150 years and formed one of the bases for apartheid propaganda. Labuschagne (1988: 28) writes that it was not clear whether the church was the real Church of Vow; he argues that two academics⁷⁶ came to that conclusion since

⁷⁵ The Voortrekker Complex is currently the term employed by my informants when referring to the premises of Msunduzi Museum where the Church of Vow, the E.G Jansen Extension and the Pretorius House are situated. These buildings present and represent Afrikaner heritage. The position of the Voortrekker Complex is next to Church Street at the original entrance to the museum, but is now sealed off due to crime in the town. The Voortrekker Complex is also situated a few metres from the DRC and monuments to Gert Maritz and Piet Retief. The composition of this area of the Msunduzi Museum gives it an Afrikaner atmosphere.

⁷⁶ Labuschagne does not reveal who these academics were.

they feared that the place would be disgraced if it were referred to as something else. Dlamuka (2000: 3) holds that the museum was rooted in manipulating and revoking historical consciousness. I agree with Dlamuka as to how the history of the place has been presented and not presented. Oosthuizen (undated: 2) has shown that the building was used as a church from its consecration in 1840 to 1861, after which it was leased to the Natal government and used as a school. In 1874 it was sold and served as a wagon builder's shop, a mineral water factory, a chemist shop, tea-room and wool warehouse.

For most of its existence the building was used for things other than a church. Through various narratives, however, it was made into a place that embodied Afrikaner mythology, its self-proclaimed suffering, its right to land, and its relation to God. Since the Great Trek can be seen as a myth of origin for Afrikaners, the Church of Vow evokes an explanation of who Afrikaners were, who they are, where they came from and what they want to be. Cresswell (2004: 37-39), Pred (1984: 294, 1986: 23) and Massey (1997) suggest that the place was performed or 'becoming' rather than a secure ontological object rooted in the authentic. If this is applied to the context of the museum it means that the place was performed by members and non-members of the group in order for it to exist and that it was constructed by people either affirming it or rejecting it.

The identity of the museum not only draws on the Great Trek, but also on the Anglo-Boer war, since it was established in its aftermath. The war constitutes an enormous part in Afrikaner nationalism where the focus lies on the cruelties of British imperialism and suffering in the Boer refugee/concentration camps. The war constitutes a similar narrative of the struggle for land as the Great Trek. Following Cresswell (2004: 72) I believe that the museum's identity as a place constituted an indication of boundary that marked off the place separating the inside (Afrikaner) from the outside (English-speakers and others) and availing a physical manifestation for Afrikaners to position themselves culturally and politically. Previously the museum was a matter of demonstrating belonging, but it later came to separate Afrikaners from the rest. The Natal Museum had already been established as an anglophile institution, and I suggest that Afrikaners found a need to do something similar, creating an Afrikaner place of remembrance in a largely anglophile province. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was at this time clearly demonstrating a close connection between the place and a representation of a singular form of Afrikaner identity rooted in historical narratives.

The place has several sacred associations, first as representing the victory of the Voortrekkers over the Zulus and second as the gift or the result of the relationship between Afrikaners and God. Thirdly it is a place of political resistance directed towards anglophiles. Drawing on Hylland Eriksen (1996: 75), I contend that for (some) Afrikaners it became an indisputable God-given place, associated with politics, sentiments and religion in an embodied combination which resulted in a manifestation and a symbolic connection with time, place and metaphorical kinship. The building and the myth of the church represent Afrikaners' connection to the land. The church is a materialisation of the soil of Africa. The materialisation resolves, eliminates and embodies the Afrikaner feeling of rootlessness and displacement in the world, both historically and in the present. These were aspects used by the NP in their political propaganda and they contribute to the fact that the museum remains a contested place even today.

Although Giliomee (2003: 22-23) has attempted to draw Afrikaner identity back to the 1700s, it is a fairly recent construction that unified a diverse population sourced in a loosely-knit web of European heritage based on language, mythology and history. The museum materialises roots for Afrikaners, e.g., in the Church of Vow's Cape-Dutch architecture signifying both the origin of Afrikaner heritage and the locality from which the Voortrekkers journeyed. Relph (1976: 38) suggests that to have roots in a place is to have a secure frame of reference from which to reflect on the world and situate oneself in the world in connection with a sense of attachment to the place. Using architecture that echoes Afrikaner origins contrasts with anglophile heritage and attempts to convey a materialised self in a deliberate effort to create an Afrikaner space in the dominant anglophile province. The place positions Afrikaner roots in Africa, and not in Europe or the west, and therefore proposes a difference from English-speakers who based their identity in a British and western context. The Church of Vow makes Afrikaner identity physically present and therefore seems more authentic.

I argue in line with Malpas (1999: 35-36) that the structures of a particular place are dependent on social ordering and on the activities of institutions and are sometimes constrained by them. At present, the past activities that were carried out at the places constrain them. Although not ethnographically established, the Church of Vow may have held an extra strong symbolism in the 1930s. Beinart and Dubow (1995: 15) and Delmont (1993:101) argue that it was a need in the 1930s and 1940s to resolve the 'poor white' problem, an issue that materialised itself clearly in political speeches directly related to museums and heritage

sites. Giliomee (2003: 352-353) describes the NP leader DF Malan's speech at Blood River in 1938. Malan compared the history of Blood River to the economic problems in a society where a 'poor white' was paid at the same level as 'blacks' and where the need to unite and solve this issue existed. Since Blood River and the Great Trek were two of the pillars that Afrikaner mythology and nationalism were based on, it is reasonable to conclude that the Church of Vow that rested on the same imaginary might have assumed a more significant role in the 1930s.

History is a central focus of the meaning of the place, and Alonso (1988: 49) argues that this is because the meaning of the past defines the outcome of the present. The meaning of the place was rooted in Afrikaner nationalism, but several of my informants, although not of Afrikaner origin, emphasised that were it not for the Voortrekkers and Afrikaners there would be no museum today (Mpho 2006-10-03, Sabelo 2006-04-21). My informants' statements reflect Transformation ideals reconciling with the past. At present the Msunduzi Museum has chosen not to officially criticise the Afrikaner past, but to recognise it as part of the museum's history and of South African heritage. This materialises the politics of *ubuntu*. The museum's approach to heritage entails an acknowledgment that cultures are all part of each other and that they exist because they are interconnected. This is an unusual approach to heritage in post-apartheid South Africa, where the focus has mainly been on eliminating White perspectives and replacing them with a more South African approach and a strong African overtone.

My informants' statements also visualise the discrepancies between the ethnographic field and museological discourses. My informants articulated that they had decided to actively enact Transformation discourse and had assumed a multicultural position embracing the past and the present rather than criticising the past to construct the present. Pred (1986: 198) suggests that the meaning of history and place is produced in a reciprocal relationship to people's production of the same. My informants' praxis of the place embraced the past of the museum in a Transformation ethos and created a narrative that they wished to convey. This is not necessarily the same as the dominant discourses. The agent's narration will change depending on how they convey the meaning to a broader audience which will alter the experience of place.

Although established by the predominantly Christian Afrikaner community in celebration of the memory of the Voortrekkers (letter from Jansen 1912-01-29), it is not just the identity of the place that was important, but also the ‘cultural groups’ associated with the place, and which constitute its meaning. The museum held a special meaning for Afrikaners but for English-speakers this did not pertain. The *Du Toit Report* (1949: 52-54) shows that the relationship with the government during the Union of South Africa was not in line with Afrikaner nationalism. The museum was regarded as serving a minor role as a national symbol. It was suggested that it should be administered as part of the Natal Museum. I argue that there is a discrepancy between the present dominant political and museological discourse and ethnographic reality. The museum most likely played an important part at the time (1910-1948) for Afrikaners in Natal, but others and the rest of South Africa might not have held it in such high esteem. The place might even have played a role as a symbol of the oppression of Zulus and non-Afrikaners in Natal.

In 1948 plans for the expansion of the museum were already implemented (MIVM 1948-05-28). In 1955 the cornerstone of the EG Jansen Extension was laid and the extension was opened to the public in 1960.⁷⁷ The extended building reflects the central tenets of the *Du Toit Report* and its emphasis on preserving and extending White heritage expression which was at the centre of Afrikaner nationalism. The frieze over the building symbolises the defeat of the Zulus and makes reference to the iconography of the Voortrekker Monument and the Great Trek which are national symbols of Afrikanerdom. The museum’s conscious physical manifestation of the same iconography echoes familiar symbolism through which cultural unity was constructed, contributing to an advancement of Afrikaner heritage. Reference to the Voortrekker Monument sourced in iconography can often be found reproduced in displays that narrate Afrikaner history.⁷⁸ In both present and past the Msunduzi Museum manifested Afrikaner heritage using familiar iconography which strengthened heritage expressions through repetition. The repetition of familiar symbols is something that was used to express cultural identities during Transformation.

In the 1960s the DRC built the new Voortrekker Memorial Church. It exists on the museum premises and at present the museum is negotiating to acquire the building housing the education department. The church adds to the symbolism of the place and Le Roux (1962: 5)

⁷⁷ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

⁷⁸ E.g. in the display ‘The Education of the Voortrekker Child’ staged in the Church of Vow.

holds that the church is an expression of Afrikaner faith in God. In this case there is no veiled expression of values: the symbolism is here meant to be seen and understood. Le Roux (1962: 5) continues that the church's eight concrete pillars symbolise the lanterns of the night before the battle of Blood River, explained as a protective symbol inspiring the people to be watchful. In the 1970s watchfulness also came to be associated with vigilance against 'terrorists', communists and those who wanted to overthrow the state.

On the facade of the Voortrekker Memorial Church the vow made by the Voortrekkers is transcribed and surrounded by Zulu traditional weapons symbolising the attack of the Zulu warriors (Le Roux 1962: 5). The white church walls symbolise protective arms and religious strength (Le Roux 1962: 5, Oosthuizen undated: 12-13). The church architecture manifests the proclaimed difference between Zulus and Afrikaners which was in line with the socio-political ideas of the time. Drawing on the symbolism and history of the past the architecture produces a sense of group belonging. Relph (1976: 34) suggests that the relationship between the community and the place is powerful. Each reinforces the other; and the place becomes an expression of communally held belief and values. This can be seen in the celebration of 16th December where the members of the church reconnect with the symbolism and the original Church of Vow. After their service they visit the Church of Vow, an event usually accommodated by a new display of Voortrekker life and heritage (Marie 2006-11-29). During apartheid the celebration of the event was more extensive and my informant Mpho (2006-10-30) recounted what a former African staff-member told him: that African staff were asked to remain invisible on this day to avoid conflict.

The *Niemand Report* (1975) emphasised that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) should become an open-air museum. The museum started a long-term process (1979-1987) to acquire the Longmarket Street Girl's School building (NVM 1979-09-22, VMAR 1987) and to incorporate additional sites and buildings such as the Blood River heritage site, Zaylager,⁷⁹ Amajuba, the Pretorius House, the Oldest House and the Ncome Museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) never owned the sites, but only administered them because, as my informant Anna (2006-10-06) remarked, the museum had the expertise to manage them at the time. The expansion of the spatial premises made it possible to professionalise the museum and it

⁷⁹ The place is referred to as Saailaer in maps. I have here used the spelling as the museum uses it.

expanded during this period from being a heritage site to a historical museum. This was an important factor that initiated Transformation.

The satellite museums outlined above were all (except for the Ncome Museum) intrinsically connected to Afrikaner history, heritage and nationalism such as the Trek routes and the Anglo-Boer war representing victorious aspects of Afrikanerdom (NVM 1986-06-19). These spatial rearrangements of scattered places contributed to new cultural and power relations. The acquisition of the places was crucial for the structural and temporal materialisation of society. Davenport and Saunders (2000: 508) and Taylor and Shaw (1994: 35) hold that South Africa was in a crisis at the time. Yet another state of emergency was declared in 1986. I suggest that the incorporation of themes representing Afrikaner victories over other groups must be seen as a spatial heritage manifestation, identification and symbolical construction of stability in a social environment in crisis. Following Leach (2005: 306-307) and Pred (1986: 198) I hold that in moments of self-identification people see themselves reflected in places that have become familiar to them. Individuals, however, do not produce these places of their own choosing but in relation to social structures; the social becomes spatial and the spatial becomes social.

5.3.1 The Blood River Heritage Site

The Blood River Heritage Site, situated in the rural area Nqutu, close to Dundee in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, is a memorial at the site where the battle of Blood River took place. In 1967 it was proclaimed a national monument and a replica of a granite oxwagon was placed where the Voortrekkers outlined their laager (Governmental Notice 1403 of 8 September 1967). In 1971 a construction of a life-size laager consisting of 64 oxwagons cast in bronze was placed at the original battle site, but it was not until 1996 that a visitor centre and a museum were introduced (Girshick 2003: 3). From 1989-2002 the site was managed by the Msunduzi Museum (VM) and since 2002 it has been supervised by the Voortrekker Monument.

The Blood River Heritage Site is an Afrikaner memorial and has been strongly associated with the apartheid regime (Mapalala, Kuene, Laband, Hamilton & Groebler 1998). Together with the Voortrekker Monument (Pretoria) and the Taalmonument (Paarl), the Blood River Heritage Site constitutes one of Afrikanerdom's major monuments. Traditionally and symbolically the mythology of the battle and the place came to mark the beginning of

Afrikaner dominance, reinforcing historical stereotypes about Zulu 'barbarism' and 'treachery' and Afrikaners as God's chosen people (Mapalala, Kuene, Laband, Hamilton & Groebler 1998). As mentioned previously, the Blood River Heritage Site was used in apartheid politics and contributed to a dominant narrative of the place that neglected alternative versions. Although the African narrative was subversive, it still existed and challenged the dominant one.

Power relations are institutionally embedded and always involve one or more acting individuals (Pred 1986: 25-26). A counter-collective of agents can activate and narrate the contested and conflicting meaning of a place and construct their own version of its importance. According to Sithole (1998: 10-11) and the report of the panel of historians (July 1998), English-speakers regarded the battle as a central event in South African history and Africans as a symbol of struggle. Afrikaners came to use the place and the event in political propaganda during the 20th century, and 16th December was held as a national holiday.⁸⁰ These celebrations became increasingly politicised and culminated in 1938 in the centenary of the Great Trek when DF Malan declared the Blood River site 'holy ground'. This forms part of the associated meaning at present which makes it a highly contested place.

The Blood River Heritage Site has been narrated and legitimised as an Afrikaner physical remembrance of the 'right' to land in South Africa (past and present) and as the materialisation of the struggle and achievement of the forefathers. Natal was referred to as Caanan and the battle as the clash between Satan (Zulu) and the children of God (Afrikaners) or a battle between paganism and Christianity (report of the panel of historian July 1998). Some Afrikaner writers had since the 1940s warned against this kind of self-glorification that legitimised white dominance and by the 1970s there were debates among Afrikaner intellectuals, theologians, journalists and politicians on the issue (report of the panel of historians July 1998). Public critique included Reverend J Gertenbach of the DRC, quoted in *The Natal Witness* (1971-12-17):

To equate the Afrikaner volk with Israel is to deny Christ and the uniqueness of his redemption. To describe Blood River as a 'miracle' is misleading because miracles cannot be proclaimed in human nationalism. To turn Blood River into an event justifying selfish separation and apartheid for the special Afrikaner people brings us to the level of the Pharisee who prayed 'I thank thee, Lord, that I am not of these men'.

⁸⁰ Today the day is called the day of reconciliation.

After 1994 most Afrikaner heritage sites in the country were handed over to, and administered from, the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. After the democratic election in 1994 it was clearly stipulated by director Pols and the Board of Trustees of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) that they needed to remain objective, non-political and neutral about the Blood River Site (MEVM 1997-02-14). The battle at Blood River had been portrayed as a pivotal event to the Great Trek, an event that 'saved' Afrikaner people and created Afrikaners as a group (report of the panel of historians July 1998). These were very strong identity markers that gave the place its sacred and political meaning. In post-1994 these connotations needed to be renegotiated so that the place could be appropriated in a larger South African cultural context. Considering the contested meaning and constituted identity, such an undertaking was highly problematic to all the groups involved. Although the emphasis was to deconstruct the contested meanings of the place, Girshick (2003: 3) holds that the decision to add a Zulu component in 1998 was not undisputed and met with resistance from militant Afrikaners. Changes were decided on, carried out and implemented by the government, but the general Afrikaner public did not appear to be in favour of these changes.

Today spectres of Afrikaner nationalism still continue to haunt the Blood River Heritage Site. Until the present time clashes between groups at the place still occur. At the 16th December 2004 celebration an African journalist was not welcomed and was called a 'kaffir' but his White colleague was allowed to stay. A German tourist and his 'black partner' were told to leave the bronze wagon by members of the Daughters of Zion,⁸¹ a group which was banned after the incident (*The Witness* 2004-12-20). At my visit to the site in 2007 I was retold that the director of the Msunduzi Museum had to wait at the gate for the director of the Voortrekker Monument to accompany him to the traditional morning prayer at the bronze wagon laager, and that African staff-members of the Msunduzi Museum were asked if they were not on the wrong side.⁸² The feeling of cultural belonging and exclusion is strong at this place to such an extent that at times it excludes other groups. The Blood River site still forms a part of a tradition for Afrikaner families who camp there on 16th December. Bishop (2005-12-17) holds that some even wear Voortrekker dress when celebrating the event.

At my visit to the site in 2007 people were camping outside the monument, but I did not note any Voortrekker outfits. In the bronze laager a small group of people were blowing horns and

⁸¹ A religious and nationalist Afrikaner group.

⁸² Meaning that they should be on the other side of the river iNcome were the Ncome Museum stands.

parading the Orange Freestate flag⁸³ and the Transvaal Republic flag⁸⁴ with the Hebrew letters YaHWeH (Jehovah) on the white stripe. Etta Judson⁸⁵ identified the flag and the group as the Daughters of Zion. She described them as a 'fundamentalist religious group' who were trespassing because there was a police interdict against them entering the terrain. The Voortrekker Monument disassociates itself from the Daughters of Zion and their ideologies (letter from Judson 2008-03-18). It must be clearly pointed out that this celebration was not orchestrated by the Blood River Heritage Site, but was an individual initiative from the group. The sentiments of the Boer Republic that played an important role in Afrikaner nationalism were, I conclude, clearly acted out by the Daughters of Zion parading with flags. While they were doing this at a Voortrekker site they emphasised a connection between the two pillars that Afrikaner nationalism rested on. They linked different times and spaces together in one patriotic expression.

Reading the vow, praying, dressing up in Voortrekker outfits, and parading flags is a physical re-enactment at a particular site that creates a bond with history. This is a manifestation of ancestry and a demonstration of citizenship. The actors manifest and strengthen the right to land and to be regarded as both African and South African, reflecting that they are indigenously African parallel to any other cultural expression in the region. At present Afrikaner identity is experiencing a crisis, since they are dealing at the same time with the apartheid past and are trying to reform and appropriate their identity in keeping with new democratic ideals. Blood River is a contested place that has difficulties in conforming to the new democratic dispensation due to its association and function in the past drawing on segregation between groups. Therefore it functions as a site that manifests separation rather than reconciliation.

5.3.2 The Oldest House and the Andries Pretorius House

The Oldest House is a satellite museum to the Msunduzi Museum. Also known as 333 Boom Street or the Voortrekker House,⁸⁶ It was built in 1853 as a homestead. Today the house is located in the business area of Pietermaritzburg at Boom Street and not on the Msunduzi

⁸³ Used from 1856-1902.

⁸⁴ Used from 1858-1902.

⁸⁵ Staff-member of the Voortrekker Monument.

⁸⁶ These three names are simultaneously used by my informants. I have chosen to use the name the Oldest House.

Museum premises at Langalibalele Street and the location results in a low number of visitors. The house holds little symbolism in the urban landscape compared to other satellite museums, because it was not attached to any event in Afrikaner nationalist narrative, neither did it play a dominant role in African, Indian or Coloured narratives. The meaning of the house was not constantly acted out and narrated, as in the case of the Church of Vow, and has therefore not received contested meanings or played a significant role in the construction of heritage. Yet the place was a marker of identity and when acted out, held associations with urbanism, land, and ownership, especially for Afrikaners, and symbolised a construction of White South Africa. In the 1950s the 333 Boom Street pamphlet (undated) writes that the Pietermaritzburg municipality organised a plaque that identified it as the oldest house in the town. It shows a clear interest in the beginning of apartheid to identify and mark out places in the urban landscape that differentiate Whites from the other.

The house was declared a national monument on 9th September 1979 and in 1982 it was bought by the Msunduzi Museum (VM), restored and opened as a satellite museum in 1987 (333 Boom Street Pamphlet, undated). The Oldest House becomes a symbol of Voortrekker achievements in establishing Pietermaritzburg and the Republic of Natalia. It can be located within the discourse of Afrikaner nationalism that invested heavily in the sentiments of the Boer Republic and is therefore a reference to the socio-political climate. During this time there was an increased militarism in White South African society; young men fought in Angola, Namibia and in the South African townships. To institute a symbol that drew on the establishment of White towns or republics was a direct response to the political climate.

The incorporation of the house as part of the museum was also a matter of staging a difference between Afrikaner and anglophile heritage and homesteads, manifested in one of the alternative names: the Voortrekker House. The urban context has predominantly been connected to anglophile heritage, whereas rural contexts are associated with Afrikaner heritage. The Oldest House is a spatial materialisation of Afrikaner heritage used in a historical narrative of urban Pietermaritzburg. It legitimized and made visual an Afrikaner urban presence in a predominantly anglophile town after the British annexation of the Boer Republic; and at the same time deconstructed the image of urban heritage being anglophile-dominated. In the 1980s this was part of the museum's renegotiation and attempt to expand the concept of Afrikaner identity.

At present the Msunduzi Museum is trying to establish a new association of the Oldest House. To construct a multicultural ownership is simpler than at other places because it is not infused with negative meanings of Afrikaner nationalism. Nevertheless, it represents a White colonial home and the museum through different museum activities aims to transform it into a multicultural site of reconciliation in keeping with the government's promotion of national healing and reconciliation. The plan is to include the house in the herb-garden project and focus on healing among different 'cultural groups' in Pietermaritzburg.

The Andries Pretorius House or Welverdiend is situated at the Msunduzi Museum and is part of the area known as the Voortrekker Complex.⁸⁷ Andries Pretorius, one of the Voortrekker leaders, was given the farm Welverdiend in 1840 for his services at the battle of Blood River (Oosthuizen undated: 11-12, Pols 1988: 164). The incorporation of this building must be seen in the light of the *Niemand Report* (1975) that recommended that the museum become an open-air museum. Oosthuizen (undated: 11-12) and Pols (1988: 164) write that in 1965 the house was declared a national monument. At the time the house existed in the township of Edendale that later became part of the KwaZulu homeland and it was decided that the house should be moved and reconstructed at the Msunduzi Museum (VM) premises in 1981. In 1984 it was opened to the public.

The Andries Pretorius House was physically removed from the African township to a place within a 'White territory' of Pietermaritzburg. The act of relocating the house articulates racial alignment and the racial zoning of cultural property and seemed to reassure preservation of the house and its meaning. It was a manifestation of self and others where the area KwaZulu was not part of the White self, since it became an African legislated area. The house location in an African area was conflicting with the symbols the house held of Afrikanerdom; the intangible meaning was conflicting with the meaning of the physical location. What was imperative in this process was to save the meaning of the house, and not the physical house itself. Oosthuizen (undated: 11-12) writes that only about one third of the original building material was used in the reconstruction.

The association that the house had with a Voortrekker leader played a political role in the turbulent political climate of the 1980s. Andries Pretorius as a leader came to embody the

⁸⁷ The area of the Msunduzi Museum premises that is occupied by the Church of Vow, the EG Jansen extension and the Andries Pretorius House is the area that is referred to as the Voortrekker Complex.

virtues, actions and struggle of Voortrekker men. The house therefore reinforced the idea of the strong patriarchal leadership of apartheid that associated itself with the image of the 'heroic' and 'modest' Voortrekker leaders. The house is a material expression and a reminder of Afrikaner security, leadership and governance and embodied confidence in strong leadership in the 1980s. It was not the house itself that needed to be saved from KwaZulu, but rather the intangible expression of a dominant Afrikaner identity and of victory, land, role models and homes that needed to be salvaged. In the 1980s political climate Africans were regarded as invaders and Whites needed to take precautions against them. The Andries Pretorius House revealed the museum's visualisation of socio-political structures that exposed the ideas in heritage preservations.

The house is an important physical symbol in this context and my field research reveals that Afrikaners attach considerable significance to the concept of home and family and use it as an identity-marker to distinguish themselves from English-speakers. The house is a visual reminder, a place that signifies the conclusion of a diasporic journey, while the artefacts within the house remind from where the diaspora originated. Tolia-Kelly (2003: 316-317) argues that a home has many incarnations associated and intertwined with the social memory of the group and continues to be a resource of identification. Bachelard and hooks explain people's relations to the house similarly. Bachelard (1994: 19) sees the primal space that framed our understanding of the space outside; hooks (1990) suggests that 'black children' growing up in segregated societies associate White homes with oppressive powers. This place evokes multiple narratives that could be beneficial in the museum's Transformation. The story of the house is not just a story of Andries Pretorius, but is also about the multicultural community that has used the place after him.

Taking that the house represented security and land for more recent Afrikaner generations, it is possible, following hooks' (1990) statement, that it could also represent loss of land and rights for Africans. Yet the Andries Pretorius House was not acted on in narratives or as a symbol in the struggle against oppression and it is not regarded as a symbol of oppression. The meaning of a place is always dependent on people's narratives and relations to it. If there are no relations to it then there is no meaning applicable to the place.

White places as symbols of oppression sometimes hold more meaning for Whites as oppressors than for blacks. For Whites these places become dualistic. On the one hand they

have positive connotation symbolising Whites in power. On the other they symbolise the White role as subjugating other 'cultural groups', the latter a tainted history that Whites deal with daily and which they are constantly associated with. These are aspects that all 'cultural groups' need to come to terms with in the democratic South Africa. It is often through narratives by Whites that White oppression is applied to places and buildings. When Whites write about places as symbols of oppression they are trying to comprehend and come to terms with history and create a new narrative. When Africans, Indians and Coloureds write about the same issues they are trying to understand themselves in relation to former and changing power structures and trying to deconstruct old symbols of power. White South African narratives about places of oppression are usually detailed whereas African narratives in general associate White South African places with oppression. In this process Whites, of course, highlight aspects that are important for their understanding of history, identity and power; but their narrative of a place might not be the same as African narratives of the same place. What Whites considered oppressive might not be oppressive for Africans, and vice versa, and it is therefore important to allow multiple versions of history.

The Andries Pretorius House is presently located at the Voortrekker Complex, forming an Afrikaner enclave on the museum premises. Since most of the museum activities are staged in the main building, it enforces the assumption of the diminished significance of Afrikaner themes. By forming a Voortrekker Complex the museum is trying to find ways to modify a previous dominant heritage without suppressing and demeaning it. The Andries Pretorius House is at present displayed as a Voortrekker house showing an 1800-settler lifestyle. It has become a symbol of femaleness and home, related to the concept of the *volksmoeder*. The house is therefore a visual expression of entrenched gender roles and a more subtle expression of Afrikanerdom. It is a reference to the present social climate and toned-down characteristics of Afrikaner identity and mythology. This is both a continuation and a renegotiation of a heritage that Afrikaners and others find ambiguous.

5.3.3 Zaylager and Amajuba

The farm Zaylager, located on the outskirts of Estcourt in northern KwaZulu-Natal, has similar characteristics to those discussed above regarding the Oldest House and the Andries Pretorius House. Gert Maritz, one of the Voortrekker patriarchs, established the farm when the Voortrekkers first entered the area. It is now considered the oldest farm in the locality.

After the death of Piet Retief at Mgungundlovu, the Zulu king Dingane sent his impis to attack the Voortrekkers. Maritz defended himself and the farm, but after counter-attacks he left the farm in March 1838. The farm contained the oldest irrigation furrow, the first ploughed field, the Afrikaner Rudolph family's cemetery, and an old wagon road. The farm was the scene of military action during the Anglo-Boer war (*The Midlands Observer* 1991-06-19, VMAR 1986, letter from the National Monuments Council 1982-02-01).

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) established an interest in Zaylager in 1985, but it only lasted until March 1989 when the minister of Education and Culture approved the museum's custodianship (letter from Pols 1989-08-08, NVM 1985-02-28). The museum planned to make Zaylager an open-air museum focusing on farm life and associated with the overall plan of making the Msunduzi Museum (VM) the most important open-air museum in the country (NVM 1986-02-20). My field research has shown that Afrikaners consider themselves and their identity as having an affinity with the outdoors and with nature, perhaps more so than other White groups do. Considering this an open-air museum was most likely regarded as an appropriate expression of Afrikanerdom and was perhaps why the museum acted so readily on government suggestions.

The acquisition of Zaylager embodied stereotypes of Afrikaner heritage. It shows the mythologisation of the Afrikaner male self as a farmer – something that was also used in the concept of the *volksmoeder*. The farm was connected to a national romantic idea of the peasant reinforced in Afrikaner nationalistic expression. This was one of the important aspects that were used to juxtapose Afrikanerdom with urban anglophile heritage and pastoral Zulu heritage. Farming as a cultural identity materialised and spatialised itself in the place through the ploughed field and irrigation furrow. The museum highlighted these aspects as important and foregrounded them as a reason why it was interested in the place. The ancestral relation materialised in symbols that the museum connected to the Voortrekkers such as the old road and the family cemetery. Further manifesting Afrikanerdom was the connection to the Anglo-Boer war, since the farm was situated outside the British-annexed area and therefore represented a region free from the anglophile sphere of influence. The museum highlighted these spatial symbols of Zaylager as materialising expressions of Afrikanerdom to align with a more comprehensive representation of Afrikaner history which in turn exemplified endurance and belonging in a time of the mid-1980s national crisis.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was at this stage no longer one site,⁸⁸ but constituted several places that were connected thematically in terms of their association with Afrikanerdom. While such factors were relevant in the past, they had to be drastically reconsidered during Transformation. Afrikaner history above all aimed at constructing a dominant narrative in South African history, but today it has been replaced with narratives of the struggle period. After democracy places that reinforced Afrikanerdom were no longer important in the manifestation of political cultural identity and they became structurally reorganised.

During Transformation places that represented predominantly White heritage replaced other facets of South African heritage. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) complemented Afrikanerdom with multicultural and especially African spatial expressions to reinforce the cultural representation of political power. As the expected multicultural approach has, however, mainly included African heritage, Indian and especially Coloured heritage continue to be imperceptible in KwaZulu-Natal. This is not reconciliation but replacement of heritage. Reconciliation, one of Transformation's most important objectives, should ultimately aim at representing all aspects of heritage in a unified expression. Archival material (MEVM 1996-07-05) has shown that at Zaylager this is visible through the plans to develop a peace garden to reconcile with the conflicting symbols of the past and to heal the present.

The incorporation of the site Amajuba, located in northern KwaZulu-Natal near Newcastle, highlighted the Msunduzi Museum's (VM) growing interest in the history of the Anglo-Boer war. Amajuba was the site where the Boers defeated the British on 27th February 1881. The site was allocated to the Msunduzi Museum (VM) on 1st May 1989 by the Minister of Education and Culture (letter from Pols 1989-08-08). The place materialised the Afrikaner struggle for land and independence from colonial powers, forming part of an identification of cultural differences from English-speakers. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) increased interest in the Anglo-Boer war during the 1980s and this could be a result of the upcoming centenary. Another reason was the use of the Anglo-Boer war as a political and cultural reference to Afrikaner survival as a symbol that strengthened the self when South Africa was experienced as being threatened politically from outside and within.

⁸⁸ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

The museum's interest in the Anglo-Boer war theme could be seen as a way of reaffirming the idea of Afrikaner nationalism, or as a way of rewriting the scope of cultural identification where the Voortrekker theme had played out its role. My field research has shown that at the present time Afrikaners relate more to the Anglo-Boer war for nationalistic and identity purposes than to the Great Trek. This may be because the war foregrounds their ethnic uniqueness from other Whites who share a common identity in the settler identity. The Afrikaners proclaimed suffering and struggle during the war, and in their refugee/concentration camps lie deeply and emotionally rooted their definition of themselves, their families and the past. Afrikaners used the suffering as a survival component in the creation of an identity which constructed their difference to other groups. The Anglo-Boer war was also used to create a unity and a common enemy through its cultural representation. Post-apartheid narratives of African struggle for freedom have used similar features of common enemies and suffering that is likewise deeply rooted in their definition of themselves, their families and the past.

The Anglo-Boer war has been regarded as the starting-point from which the Republic of South Africa emerged. The war came to represent an emerging freedom from colonial powers and gave an impression of the beginning of independence. The war suggested a difference between anglophile and Afrikaner identity and also between what was an African (Afrikaner) and what was a European (anglophile) identity. With reference to the Republic of South Africa, however, it also suggests a White historical experience that marked a difference from the rest of the population.⁸⁹ Drawing on the history that both Afrikaners and English-speakers had in common, they could exclude a narrative that was located in participation and confrontation with other groups. This representation excluded other groups from the history and therefore strengthened the idea about a supreme White state. In the late 1980s Amajuba represented a renegotiation of images that symbolised Boer victory, culturally reused at a time when apartheid was declining.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) acted on existing government policies when it chose to administer the satellite museums in the 1980s. During apartheid there was an attempt at White nation-building using aspects of Afrikanerdom. Since Natal was a predominantly anglophile-influenced province, symbols of Afrikanerdom were of significance for the Msunduzi

⁸⁹ This became a crucial aspect to deconstruct in post-apartheid museums as I show in Chapter 7.

Museum (VM). The importance given to the satellite museums produced an understanding of what the Msunduzi Museum (VM) thought worthy of preserving as national heritage symbols. Through the incorporation of the satellite places the Msunduzi Museum (VM) acted out a socio-political desire to spatialise, normalise and further continue to construct Afrikaner heritage. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was at this time becoming a cultural history museum, as government policies had long suggested. As a National Museum they spatialised and verified the nation's expectation of what was considered cultural history, and what was considered worth preserving. This illustrates spatially that the production and construction of White heritage on a government basis since 1948 had succeeded.

During Transformation the Msunduzi Museum (VM) made several changes in their spatial organisation. Malpas (1999: 105) argues that the spatial ordering of things is fundamental to the understanding of a place. Therefore spatial reorganisation of museum areas was important for the understanding of the institution's self-perception and relation to socio-political structures. The experience of place is therefore central to a discussion of Transformation that is tied up with the concept of race and cultural and democratic rights. Relph (1976: 11) argues that the personal experience of place is the basis of much of the meaning that a location has. Therefore, Transformation of a place is perceived differently from different perspectives. What was experienced as democratisation for one 'cultural group' could be experienced as decline for others and could consequently be contested. The experiences of the place become personal and emotional and are linked to aspects of cultural belonging and previous and present political agendas. Changing perspectives is deeply emotional and Transformation is therefore a much-disputed process. After 1994 Afrikaners, who were previously a dominant group and the only White group with a distinct African identity, felt a threat to their cultural expression which the democratic government took action to protect. My informant Sabelo (2006-04-21) said that the Blood River Heritage Site, Amajuba and Zaylager were incorporated into the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria to protect Afrikaner heritage.

The loss of the satellite museums could be regarded in relation to what national museums were expected to produce in terms of image (African, multicultural heritage) and what they were expected not to produce (Afrikaner, White heritage). These satellites were now administered by Afrikaners and became a spatial expression of their control. This was in line with Transformation which emphasised that 'cultural groups' themselves best managed their own cultural expression, and was a reaction to previous times where the dominant group

managed all heritage representations. These places have now changed meaning from expressing heritage to protecting heritage. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) emphasised a deep concern during Transformation with being non-political. This was to balance past heritage production and the expectations of the museum. Transformation can be characterised as something of an identity crisis trying to find a new-fangled cultural identity that included Afrikaner heritage, but was also multicultural and in line with government expectations.

Transformation is spatially visible in the Msunduzi Museum with the museum's loss of satellite museums and its incorporation of other places. Spatial reorganisation reveals the new political structures on which the museum had to act. During apartheid the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was a politically correct museum, emphasising themes of symbols that complied with the political agenda. The political compliance continued through Transformation to the present and is not something that was particular to apartheid. The political correctness during apartheid has been more acknowledged because of its political contestation during Transformation. The Msunduzi Museum has always acted on and materialised government policies to a greater extent than the Natal Museum, since the latter was research-based. The Msunduzi Museum actions formed a strategy, in the past and the present, to deal with government demands and this has become inherent in the institution, enabling its continued existence.

The spatial Transformation in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) could be regarded as more drastic, changing from one political dispensation to another. The way the museum related to socio-political structures was, however, less problematic than in the case of the Natal Museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) acted during Transformation directly on demands guided by government policies, making the spatial Transformation less drastic. The Natal Museum tried to find an individual Transformation discourse and therefore exposed a more uneven and seemingly slower change. Yet Transformation was and still is very emotional for all the parties involved. The changes resituate spatial and material fix-points that people use as symbols of identification. Such symbols of identification are normally activated in times of need and in times of social change. The advocates of Transformation demand a reorganisation of meaning of these fix-points and therefore create further instability in people's mode of identification.

5.3.4 Ncome Museum

Shields (1991) suggests that myths and places are contested and often a number of myths overlaid each other and portray different social spaces. Such is the case at Blood River Heritage Site and in the change of image in the construction of Ncome Museum. The museum is placed on the opposite side of the Afrikaner monument and is divided by the river iNcome. The name 'Ncome Museum' is drawn from the river. It means 'praise' and commemorates the bravery of the Zulu warriors who fought in the battle of Blood River. Ncome Museum is today largely an autonomous museum but shares the Msunduzi Museum Board of Trustees and is run by the museum to ensure funding and help with administration, displays, research, etc. (Anna 2006-10-09, VMAR 2002/2003, Ndlovu & Shabalala 2004: 73).

Ncome Museum sprang from the legacy project in 1997 that was constituted at cabinet level and was handed over to DACST. After the elections in 1994 the president received several proposals for new monuments and Ncome was one of the first projects to be launched (Girshick 2003: 3). The reason for launching Ncome first was the upcoming 150-year anniversary of the battle, but more importantly to propagate the image that Zulu warriors played in Zulu nationalism, a role visible in both ANC and IFP political propaganda. Ncome Museum therefore becomes a celebration of Africans achieving political rights in South Africa and not a celebration of history. This monument to the Zulu warriors was actually not a monument to the past, but one to those who fought in the struggle for freedom in South Africa. It is not about the past when Zulus lost the battle, but the mythologised role that Zulu warriors played in Zulu nationalism. This site that represented defeat in the past has come to represent victory in present time; the change in the meaning follows socio-political structures of Transformation that materialised at the place.

After 1994 the ANC handed the DACST cultural portfolio over to the IFP. Lionel Mtshali, a Zulu nationalist, became the relevant minister and in 1997 prioritised the building of Ncome Museum (Girshick 2003: 3). Within DACST there were conflicting views of the monument; the ANC wanted to promote their version of the monument and Mtshali regarded the ANC ministry as sectarian (*The Mail & Guardian* 1998-12-04). Roger Jardine was attacked by Lionel Mtshali and accused of trying to 'frustrate' the national heritage policy (*The Mail & Guardian* 1998-12-04). Girshick (2003: 3) argues that Mtshali's main concern was promoting a Zulu version in line with IFP ideology.

Ncome Museum and the Afrikaner monument were erected for similar reasons: to celebrate the past, honour the ancestors and construct a political identity based on patriarchal history and traditionalism. If the government had been sincerely interested in promoting multiculturalism, and wished to erect a monument to it, they could have chosen a more neutral place. Therefore Ncome Museum did not become a place of reconciliation, but a place where Zulu-speaking Africans – and especially African nationalists – could reconnect with symbols of nationhood, struggle, cultural identity and victory and celebrate their freedom. It is not a multicultural symbol but a culturally exclusive symbol produced during democracy.

Zulu nationalism plays an essential part in the understanding of the perception of Ncome. The dominant African view of the Battle of Blood River from 1920-1961 symbolised an event of struggle for liberation. From 1961 to the late 1980s moral values such as bravery, dedication and commitment became prominent (Sithole 1998: 11, 23). The ANC and the SACP⁹⁰ promoted the locality during the 1980s and 1990s as a place where lessons of bravery, commitment, and nation-building could be learned. The 16th December was celebrated as a day when Africans could recommit themselves to fight against oppression and racial and class exploitation (Sithole 1998: 4-5, 11). Within African and Zulu nationalist groups there was a vast difference as to how the battle was perceived. Between the ANC and the IFP there were conflicting versions; Dingane, favoured by the ANC, connected to the Battle of Blood River and the Voortrekkers, but was seen by the IFP in the 1980s as an untrustworthy villain because he had wanted to kill king Shaka in 1828 (Sithole 1998: 18-19). Conservative African elitists viewed the battle as a blemish in the history of race relations, while the ANC and SACP tried to justify the armed struggle, *umkhonto weSizwe*,⁹¹ and link it to the battle of Blood River (Sithole 1998: 11-13, 23). The meaning of the place is therefore not only contested between Afrikaner and African groups, but also among African groups themselves.

DACST appointed a committee of racially mixed academics to plan the museum. De Wet⁹² articulated what I hold to be the government's purpose with the monument by saying: 'It is now time for the Zulu to express their greatness through tangible symbolism' (MIVM 1998-08-15). The Zulu attack formation *izimpondo zenyathi*, 'the horns of the bull', was considered

⁹⁰ The South African Communist Party.

⁹¹ The armed wing of the ANC.

⁹² A member of the committee.

a suitable shape for the monument and twenty-three shields were hung to symbolise the different Zulu regiments. In 1999 DACST deputy director-general Musa Xulu decided to establish a visitor centre and added an oval building behind the monument in the shape of a Zulu shield. These components are at present used in the teaching of IKS which is also promoted by the government as Transformation (Ngobese 2003: 5-6, Ndlovu & Shabalala 2004: 74). The monument was intended to represent male Zulu warfare which is a simplified version of Zulu heritage. The theme of war was most likely to assert a balance with the Afrikaner monument, but it entrenched the stereotypes of Zulu heritage and was a one-sided representation of Zulu maleness.

John Laband⁹³ argues in a letter that the site of Ncome was particularly appropriate, since it directly faces the existing Afrikaner monument and the terrain has characteristics of both attack and retreat by the Zulu army (letter from Laband undated). This shows how the planning group regarded history and ethnicity. It was apparently important to them to allocate to each 'cultural group' their own space. This was especially visible on the opening of the place when a single function could not be held because, as explained in *The Mail and Guardian* (1998-12-04), there were two different cultures involved. I argue that there were two reasons, firstly because the separateness and uniqueness of 'cultural groups' were celebrated during apartheid and entrenched in people's thinking. Ncome became a physical manifestation of such entrenched thinking. Secondly, the Zulu memorial would not be properly remembered or celebrated if it were incorporated in the Afrikaner monument and would be regarded as merely an artificial component added to the already existing monument. This shows aspects of 'shelving', which is visualising democracy by making sure that all 'cultural groups' are equally represented. It is multiculturalism on separate demands, accommodating different locations for the celebration of different heritages, but it is not a multiculturalisation of heritage or representations. The place continues to be contested because it does not show reconciliation and upholds apartheid values of separate development and an imaginary of cultural diversity and uniqueness.

Ncome Museum is a place that embodies political, nationalistic and racial conflicts, but it is narrated as an example of promoting national unity. At the opening on 16th December 1998 Lionel Mtshali said to *The Natal Witness*:

⁹³ A member of the committee.

One of the tragedies of mankind's history is that it has been etched by the blood of soldiers and warriors. At the same time one of the triumphs of history is that great nations have been built as former foes have been reconciled and joined hands to build a shared future ... South Africa must cling to the belief that peace and reconciliation have emerged after the bitter lessons of war, and that nations have been built, not as a consequence of war but as a consequence of the determination to avoid war and conflict ... Ncome monument and museum will serve to promote peace and reconciliation. This museum is no dusty collection of artefacts. It is here to teach us how to build a peaceful future (Bishop 1999-11-27).

Ndlovu and Shabalala (2004: 30) argue similarly that the spatial separation gave the visitor an opportunity to reflect on the past and its history. I argue that by spatially organising the place according to the rules of separation, a comfort zone has been produced from which heritage representations can be experienced but not questioned. This means that the place was not positioned differently, or reconciled with its contested meaning. Transformation made room for a new cultural expression but did not break with the apartheid classification or spatial organisation of heritage. The separation could be due to the fact that the planning committee encouraged the government openly to support a movement away from the one-sided representation of the battle (report of the panel of historians 1998-09-01). Robertson and Richards (2003: 4) argue that in the same way that dominant groups create the meaning of the landscape, the meaning of resistance is also visible. The intention was not to suppress any interpretations, but to support and stimulate conflicting interpretations of the battle (Mapalala, Kuene, Laband, Hamilton and Groebler 1998).

When the place is visited, the symbols of separation are activated and despite reconciliation efforts they symbolise racial segregation. The classification is so entrenched in people's mind that visitors might not reflect on it. The conflict is not resolved or reconciled, but is repeated and acted out by Whites as well as Africans. The differences are constantly narrated and become part of the understanding of the self and others in a present heritage landscape. It might be a democratic 'shelving' of heritage, but it is not a unified explanation of South African history. At present Transformation has not found a form to present a unified multicultural heritage – an aspect that will take time to formulate and spatialise. South African heritage will for some time continue to be presented as 'shelved' heritage – heritage as separate units – because this reflects the reality of the social environment.

The planning committee had a unique opportunity to claim that they were not prisoners of history, that they could learn from history. They encouraged the panel to refigure and rework the symbolism of the place when planning the monument (Hamilton & Kunene undated).

Girshick (2003: 6) suggests that the objectives were to deconstruct colonialism and promote reconciliation, which becomes quite ironic at a place symbolising two different nationalistic expressions and conflicts. The ANC (1994) endorsed reconciliation, promoting nation-building, redressing, correcting and giving new and appropriate perspectives to historical facts, something that the planning group tried to convey. The word 'correction' is something that is commonly used when speaking about re-addressing images of history and places. There is a tendency to regard old images of history as wrong and to hold that they can be corrected in museums. Correcting, however, leaves very little room for multiple and conflicting expressions and furthers a one-sided view of history. The plans for Ncome Museum were to correct Afrikaner nationalist-dominant narratives of the place and to introduce (deliberately or unintentionally) an African nationalist interpretation. Correcting the expressions left no room for alternative multicultural expression and no contemporary explanation as to why this monument was so important in today's South Africa.

At the Ncome Museum and Blood River Heritage Site one can encounter the possibilities of past, present and future. Malpas (1999: 181) argues that a sense of the past is tied to the sense of the place. The past is also at the same time part of the actions of the present; the distance (between races) the temporality (past, present and future), and the spatiality (Ncome-Blood River) produce an understanding of the contested meanings of place. To resolve these contested meanings the visitor must be fully aware of the role of the place in the past and the present, though most visitors are not.

5.3.5 Spatial Transformation of the Msunduzi Museum

The government spatialised the idea of Transformation through the Ncome Museum. In the process it made the ideological structures of cultural politics in a democratic South Africa visible. When Ncome Museum is spatially analysed the discrepancies between multicultural politics and African nationalism within DACST become visible. The Ncome Museum also forms part of the structural Transformation of the Msunduzi Museum. In 2002 the museum lost governance over the Blood River Heritage Site, Zaylager and Amajuba, but the Afrikaner places that existed on the museum premises or in Pietermaritzburg were retained. The museum gained the Ncome Museum which demonstrates a shift in political values and visualises new guidelines for the museums. Museums are affected by structures acting on them or rejecting them. Since the inception of the Msunduzi Museum political power has

manifested itself in the place. The political shift from apartheid to democracy made no difference - the museum was still an instrument in the cultural political machinery.

As Transformation was implemented in the Msunduzi Museum and started to assume a more multicultural appearance, it was suggested that the identity of the Church of Vow and the Andries Pretorius House would remain the same as before (NVM 1995-07-27). Previous developments and decisions undertaken by the museum expressed the desire and need to preserve what was regarded as Afrikaner heritage. In preserving these ideals the museum remained sensitive to the previous dominant (Afrikaner) heritage in a new political dispensation. The way that the museum intentionally addressed the retention of aspects of Afrikaner heritage exemplified reconciliation in the context of Transformation to reflect a new heritage climate. Yet Afrikaner heritage and history are still a sensitive subject that trigger emotions among all 'cultural groups'.

My informants believed that the representation of history and heritage should ideally be by a person from the relevant 'cultural group'. This is no doubt a reaction to apartheid structures when White researchers represented the history of all 'cultural groups'. The Msunduzi Museum has addressed this and has taken precautions to employ African and Afrikaner researchers, but no Coloured or Indian researchers. This can also be seen when analysing who works where in the museum. For instance, complaints were made by the public about non-Afrikaners and non-Afrikaans-speaking staff working at the Church of Vow (Margareta 2006-10-11). Therefore the museum tried to make sure that either Afrikaans-speaking staff members or Afrikaners were employed there. The Church of Vow is still allied to cultural affiliation and remains dependent on the apartheid classification of people based on language and colour.

During Transformation the Msunduzi Museum included African and Indian heritage features in 2002 – a Shiva Perumal temple and a Zulu traditional homestead. My informant Mpho (2006-10-30) regarded these as an important addition to the place. They spatialised the museum's desire to alter the place from an exclusively White domain to one that was multicultural. But a Zulu traditional homestead can be regarded as a Zulu nationalistic symbol in keeping with Inkatha's promotion of traditional ideals. Halfacree (2003: 142) suggests that rural features held symbolic importance in relation to nationhood and identity. In my view, however, the traditional homestead reveals the museum grappling with representing African

modernity and tradition in the present and failing to deal with issues such as class and westernisation. The rural homestead conveys a simplistic and idealised reflection of Zulu heritage, ignoring the complexities of its composition.

The Msunduzi Museum has transited from being an Afrikaner enclave to a multicultural place, in the sense of representing mostly White and African interests. Coloured heritage is still underrepresented and this is mainly because there is considerable ambiguity among the staff-members as to how to represent it. Coloured heritage is regarded by staff-members as not being distinctive, drawing mainly on the heritage expression of other 'cultural groups'. The museum currently seems unable to realise a spatial expression of Coloured heritage on museum premises as they have done with the other 'cultural groups'.

5.4 Name

A great part of the museum's identity is constituted by a name and is associated with power. How people react to this is important to recognise when scrutinising Transformation. Basso (1992: 221, 242) argues that names are expressions of values and that it is in relation to values that name and place can be understood. Names are socially constituted, transmitted and applied and they correspond to a way of relating, being in and classifying the world. I suggest that names are expressions of identity and belonging; changing a name becomes a visible and tangible expression of a shift of power and Transformation. When naming a place it is given meaning constituted within a group that narrates and materialises past, present and future and the values associated with this. Pred (1986: 7) suggests that when incorporating a name into a time-space continuum the place is conceptualised in an unbroken flow of events related to the agents. Harvey (1996: 221) argues that without a name the process of constituting a mediated world of time-space relations would fall apart.

Names are spatial manifestations of time and the agents' relation to time. The Msunduzi Museum was named the Voortrekker Museum in 1912,⁹⁴ but it was not until 1954 that this was formally institutionalised by Governmental notice 825 of 30 April 1954. This is a group name that draws on Afrikaner identity, affinity and Voortrekker history. The name of the Natal Museum is a colonial name which aimed to represent the geographical area of the

⁹⁴ See Appendix: Genealogy of the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

province of Natal.⁹⁵ Natal was a British colony until the Union of South Africa. The name symbolises anglophile affinities. Plumwood (2005: 383-384) argues that colonial names carry a political reflection of a colonial relationship and can be seen as an act of power over the land and those who inhabit it.

The *State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931* states that a museum's name must be approved by the minister of the department in charge of museums. In the *Cultural Institution Act 66 of 1989* and in the *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* the minister could change the name upon recommendations from the museum Board of Trustees. The museum's name was under South African law not based on what the museum desired but rather on what the government required of the museum. The name therefore constituted dominant socio-political powers. Not changing a name is tantamount to affirming former power-structures and resisting new ones. Changing a name is also a way to act on power-structures and confirm them. A change in name is an act of removing the visual manifestations of former power-structures and this is similar to removing monuments and statues of former regimes from the urban landscape. Names associated with colonialism are, as argued before, highly contested and to remove them from the urban landscape is believed to constitute a way of democratising the museum. When demanding name change, governmental officials execute their powers and visualise the name in the urban landscape. When writing about name change museologists reflect Transformation and power structures and negotiate these, trying simultaneously to come to terms with what is demanded of them and shaping a museological Transformation discourse.

Re-naming places has become an interesting issue in South African urban planning. Machaba (2005: 260) writes that the renaming of places in an African vernacular reflects reawakening and pride in African tradition and culture – it is a symbolic way to mobilise ideology and play a role in nation-building. My informant Gert (2006-04-28) argued that re-naming should not just be symbolic; the new name should be used, and when used it would show Transformation. This means that when the place is acted out under the auspices of a new name it is regarded as transformed.

In 2003 the director-general of DAC, Itumeleng Mosala, linked place names to IKS and said that pre-colonial names carried meanings that were subjugated through imperialistic

⁹⁵ Now KwaZulu-Natal.

colonisation (SAPA 2003-08-16). For Mosala renaming is part of a larger Transformation, is connected to cultural politics, and entails regaining 'lost' information and power over both cultural representation and land. Significantly Mosala claims that: 'Colonial reconfiguring impacted and still impacts on the human psyche. It perpetuated and confirmed colonial stereotypes that propagated that there was creative thinking prior to westernising in Africa in general and South Africa in particular' (SAPA 2003-08-16). Comments like this expose an entrenched perception of racial difference. Mosala did not consider South Africa's racially interrelated history, but treated history and culture as separate entities in conflict with each other, asserting that places-names constitute one group's power over the other. This comment has its roots in BCM which claims that Whites distorted traditional African cultures. Pred (1986: 21) argues that if a sense of place is associated with symbolic emotional meaning, then memories that were attached to the place can only be seen in relation to the past insertion of meaning and underlying power relations. When Mosala argued that colonial names form part of the political landscape, he did not take into consideration that new names also formed part of the new political landscape.

Naming places is a way of classifying the landscape which people inhabit. It is a way to mark borders between groups, between time and space by indicating to whom the place belongs. This was reflected in one of the letters to the Msunduzi Museum (VM) suggesting new names for the museum.⁹⁶ Kelsey, a 13-year-old learner, wrote:

The war between the Voortrekkers and the Zulus is history, so you must have all different buildings for all different tribes for their history to be seen by other people, like Boers and the British, they must also have a building for their past. But the Voortrekkermuseum [sic], must stay the same (letter from Kelsey 2003-08-26).

Despite the writer's young age, she articulated a tendency to view 'cultural groups' as separate units in the same way as Mosala. She expressed a spatial separation between the groups and used that as an argument why the name of the museum should not be changed.

⁹⁶ She agreed that the museum could change its name, but that the name of the Voortrekker Complex should not change.

5.4.1 The Natal Museum

From the outset the name of the Natal Museum was contentious. In 1882 the Natal Museum planning committee received a letter of encouragement written by Roland Trimen.⁹⁷ He suggested that they should found a Natal not a Pietermaritzburg Museum because he believed that the ‘colonial government’ should recognise the museum’s importance for a colony rich in natural resources (Brooks 1988: 63). The Natal Society was instrumental in establishing the museum, but it was administered and funded under colonial statutes and was a reflection of British imperial interests in the province’s natural resources and cultural history.

The Natal Museum was named after the province and is a geographical name. The choice of name symbolises a colonial place within an African landscape located in a context of British colonial structures, time and space. The museum was located in Africa and at the same time connected to European values. Since the museum’s name was connected to colonial structures it evokes a context of domination and the subjugation of the other. At present the name has become contested because it is considered to uphold and celebrate values such as colonialism and White domination. Retaining the name, however, acknowledges the significance and accomplishments of the people who constructed the place. At present this produces sentiment for some and resentment for others, for names are symbols of belonging for some but are barriers for others. Therefore a change in name proposes opening up the urban landscape, breaking racial barriers and democratising the place.

The museums have devised different strategies. Natal Museum maintained its old name throughout most of Transformation. It was not until early in 2008 that the museum announced to the media that it intended to change its name because it had ‘repositioned itself in line with the changing needs of the country’ and needed a new identity and name that would ‘reflect its role within the communities it serves locally and nationally’ (*The Witness* 2008-01-04). The public were invited to make suggestions that would be selected by a committee appointed by the museum’s Board of Trustees (Ngobese 2008-01-10).

My informant explained that before 1994 they were negotiating to change the name, and Ukhahlamba Museum was suggested, but never implemented. He told me that a change could jeopardise the status and reputation of the museum in that the name had a ‘brand’ associated

⁹⁷ Director of the South African Museum in Cape Town.

with professionalism (Nigel 2006-04-11). His argument suggests how closely connected activities and agents are to the institution and how some staff-members' personal identity and emotive responses were vested in the institution. At present there is a discrepancy between the older and previous staff-members and the younger ones that do not have the same emotional attachment to the institution, like my informant Thabang (2006-04-04), who would like to see the name change. The name is still associated with the name of the province in which it exists and is thus connected to a broader South African context. It refers to previously White territory which demarcates a difference between the former 'homelands' and White areas. The name could perpetuate segregation and cultural distinctiveness. My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) believed that the 'Natal' in the province name 'KwaZulu-Natal' would soon disappear and that renaming the museum could be reconsidered if needed.

Changing the name is an act that reveals Transformation objectives. Retaining a name does not necessarily reveal the opposite, but rather the difficulties associated with Transformation and the sentiments that a political shift initiates. Retaining the name materialises White accomplishment and existence in the urban landscape and positions and reflects previous power relations. This could be regarded either as a protest against the changing South African socio-political climate, or as an act emphasising multiculturalism including White expressions. Through either changing or retaining a name, the relationship between the museum, the community and government is developed into a discourse.

5.4.2 Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex

The first record dealing with a name change appeared in 1996; the Board of Trustees decided that the name 'Voortrekker Museum' was no longer appropriate. Director Pols pointed out that it was up to parliament not the museum to change the name (MEVM 1996-07-05). It is obvious from the following discussion that he wanted to retain the name. Roger Jardine, director-general of DACST, met with the museum in 1997, suggesting that the name Voortrekker Museum be retained for the Voortrekker complex, and that a new umbrella name be established for the museum as a whole (MEVM 1997-06-14). The museum was at this time under major reconstruction; it was not certain whether the Natal and Msunduzi Museums would form a flagship institution or become provincial museums. Thus the matter was put on hold pending future discussion.

In 1999 the issue arose again. Director Pols described the name change as a ‘very sensitive matter’ since the museum was ‘internationally known’ (letter from Pols 1999-02-02). I hold that this was an aspect of connecting to a global White identity as a way of distinguishing the museum from members of the population that did not have roots in Europe. It also reconnected with relationships between South Africa and Europe. Machaba (2005: 182) writes that change evokes feelings of insecurity and loss of established identities. Pols argued that because of the ‘very important and historical Voortrekker collection’, the word ‘Voortrekker’ should be included in the new name. To reflect the overall changes of the museum, the Board of Trustees decided that the name should be changed to Voortrekker-Msunduzi Museum, reflecting the status of the museum (letter from Pols 1999-02-02), but the name was never changed.

In 2003 the renaming issue reappeared and the Board of Trustees agreed that the name ‘Voortrekker Museum’ was misleading, since the museum was dealing with multicultural history and not only with Voortrekker history (MIVM 2003-10-03). At the same time the museum announced in the media that they wished the public to participate in the decision of the name change (Sabelo 2006-04-21). Public participation can be regarded as part of the people-driven process that the RDP stipulated, but was also a way of marketing the museum as a democratic place. In *The Witness* (2003-07-31) the museum suggested that the new name should preferably reflect a local geographic feature, could not be a name of a person or a population or interest group, and had to promote the spirit of reconciliation. Comparing this to the letter from Pols (1999-02-02), it is clear that the museum had already decided what the name should be. The process of announcing it to the media could be a way of drawing attention to the museum as a transforming institution of formally inviting people to be part of it. This reflects the RDP ideology.

My informant Thabo (2006-03-17) explained that the river Msunduzi that the museum was named after existed long before the conflict and that it would prompt the spirit of reconciliation. The name therefore changed from that formally associated with a group to that of a local place. Both the Voortrekker Museum and the Msunduzi Museum names create different political spaces. The Voortrekker name had created an Afrikaner place in a dominant anglophile political structure and during apartheid times a place of belonging and exclusion in line with apartheid socio-political structures. The name Msunduzi Museum created a democratic place in a dominant African political structure. Connecting the new name to a

‘neutral’ geographical feature was a way of trying to reclassify the museum and break with the former association of the place.

Public response to the renaming was subdued and emanated mostly from Whites,⁹⁸ but this reflected the importance the museum had for Whites and the role it did not play for other groups. It also reflects the lack of insight the public had into the nature of the museum activities. Most of the people that responded seemed to be unaware that the museum had for some time been a multicultural museum, believing that the museum was mainly a museum for Voortrekker historical items. The majority of letters, e.g., from Poulter (2003-07-31) suggest names referring to White settler culture. The name ‘The Voortrekker Museum’ was part of the identity of the museum which appears to be so strongly connected to Whites that it seemed impossible for the letter writers even to suggest names not connected to the identities of Whites.

Andries Botha, development organiser and member of the Taal en Kultuurvereniging told the media that: ‘It is not that we don’t want to reach out to other cultural groups ... why can’t the Voortrekker complex still be referred to as the Voortrekker Museum, as a subsection of the museum? Whether some people like it or not, Pietermaritzburg was founded by the Voortrekkers’ (*The Witness* 2003-07-31). A citizen of Pietermaritzburg, Jan Welter, went further in this criticism and suggested that the donations to the museum should be returned to the donors and the museum should be closed (*The Witness* 2003-07-31). The rejections could be seen as a response to the political climate that showed a rejection to the previous dominant group. Furthermore, the comment that the museum collection was no longer safe was an expression of that political situation. Johan Willemse, an Afrikaner, connected the museum emanating in the Church of Vow as the relationship between Afrikaners and almighty God constituted in the vow. He argued that the vow was rooted in the faith and culture of the Voortrekker Museum (letter from Willemse 2003-09-29). The sentiments related to the place and were strongly reflected in these letters and still have considerable meaning to many Afrikaners.

The reactions to the change showed that (some) Afrikaners in Pietermaritzburg, especially those who rooted their identity in the Voortrekker heritage, feared that the council would not

⁹⁸ Reflected in the names of the writers and the language of the authors.

honour the Voortrekker complex and that its meaning would consequently be lost. This reflects an experience of a threatened identity in Transformation. The fear was rooted in the strong association of the museum with the Church of Vow, whose meaning embodied Afrikaner identity and, therefore, the museum's identity. Although they did not visit the place, the meaning and the affiliation were reawakened in times of change and when the name was threatened.

Despite the reaction, the Voortrekker complex was never actually threatened as feared. The Voortrekker name was always proposed as a subsection of the name, but the reaction shows how deeply the name and the place were connected and rooted in Afrikaner identity. The name change became a materialisation of sentiments of Afrikaner heritage coming under threat in the new political context. The above view was shared by my informant Mpho (2006-10-30), who said that he believed that the name should remain, in part because the museum was started by the Voortrekkers. There is a discrepancy between my informant's statements as a non-Afrikaner and how Afrikaners regard non-Afrikaners' interpretation of the name. Willemse's view might be a reflection of feelings of vulnerability in a new political dispensation. Afrikaner heritage was no longer dominant and unique, but was equal to all other heritages in a context in which those presently in power of heritage were the former other of the Afrikaners.

In the letters there is very little consideration of multicultural heritage. Heritage and cultures are expressed as distinctive and unique, which is reflected in suggestions of name. In the letter from Richter (2003-08-13) the pioneer history of the Afrikaner community is emphasised, and the writer indicates that this distinct identity should be preserved with other relevant heritages of South Africa's richly diverse history. Her argument was deeply rooted in the cultural classification and discourse of segregation and difference that emphasised cultural diversity and distinctiveness.

Piet Strauss, national leader of Die Voortrekkers, wrote in a statement quoted in a letter from Opperman (2003-08-13) that he regretted that the Church of Vow and the Voortrekker Museum would change their name and thematic focus. He regarded the museum as a notable site of cultural heritage. He suggested that in the future this would be handled with sensitivity; otherwise it could be tantamount to an open marginalisation of this heritage. He also said that the 2003 Board of Trustees of the museum largely consisted of non-Afrikaner members,

which created an impression of lack of sensitivity towards Afrikaner heritage. The objections reflected the strong cultural identity that Afrikaners had created for themselves, which gave rise to a platform from which Afrikaners could create arguments for the preservation of their heritage and from which it was possible for them to argue for a more multicultural climate that included White heritage expressions.

Gert Opperman⁹⁹ took the strong reaction by the public into consideration when the debate was taken up in the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the museum. Assurance was therefore given to concerned communities that the Voortrekker complex would be safeguarded. This was also discussed at a Board of Trustees meeting on 24th July 2003 where ‘the sacred heritage of the Voortrekkers that forms a great part of the museum would need to be safeguarded and taken care of’ (council work session held at Ncome 2003-07-24). It was again clarified that it was not up to the museum itself to change the name, but the minister of DAC had to make such a decision (MIVM 2003-10-03).

A name signifies different things dependent on what it is desired to signify (Evans 1977: 203). Renaming the museum was a way of removing the power of cultural symbolism located in the previous political dispensation. The museum symbolised Afrikaner belonging, and my informant Gert (2006-04-28) stated the importance of retaining the Voortrekker association, since there was a growing perception among many Afrikaners that their history was no longer important. The Board of Trustees discussed the issue of belonging and the question was raised, but not resolved, whether the people of Pietermaritzburg identified themselves with the museum (council work session held at Ncome 2003-07-24). When the name change was proposed people identified with the place, who would otherwise not have done, and the meaning and identity of the place was activated. Heritage is one of the things that produces security and a sense of stability for South Africans. In a changing social-political climate, people need to have a sense of stability to cling to. Since the Msunduzi Museum (VM) had functioned as a site of identification and stability, a name change was a sensitive process. Identification and stability were needed because the normative means of classifying heritage was dissolving at times of change and the symbol of the museum was relocated. When realising their symbols are about to change, people reaffirm and associate with their identity more, because of the risk of losing it.

⁹⁹ Member of the Board of Trustees of 2003 and director-general of the Voortrekker Monument.

In 2006 the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex was still officially known as the Voortrekker Museum, Pietermaritzburg. My informants believed that the name had negative connotations for many people and that it would estrange people or make them unwelcome when visiting the museum. A new name on the other hand would accommodate most people (Margareta 2006-10-11, Mpho 2006-10-30, Ntokoso 2006-04-28). My informant Marie (2006-02-11) felt that a name change would upset Afrikaner communities. The name was to be officially changed on 7th April 2006, but due to delays at DAC the official papers were not signed and the deputy minister of DAC, Ntombazana Botha, could not open the museum under its new name. This caused distress among the museum staff-members, who wanted the name changed to reflect Transformation. Plumwood (2005: 386) argues that names are connected to narratives, in this case a narrative about political power and Transformation. The political power vested in DAC failed to structurally organise a change although demanding it and the museum found itself in a complex 'in-between space'. DAC retained the museum in a name reflecting a former political dispensation and could not perceive the museum as transformed; but the institution using the new name acted as if it were transformed.

In a speech at what was meant to be the name-change ceremony the mayor of Pietermaritzburg Zanele Hlatshwayo said: 'You can't say that you have transformed until you changed [sic] your name to reflect the change' (Hlatshwayo 2006-04-07). The museum, according to her, did not reflect Transformation if this was not echoed in its name, notwithstanding the inability of the political powers to fulfil their obligations. I interpret the emphasis on name change as the decolonisation of the museum from a eurocentric-based knowledge institution and an instrument in the hands of a previous government into an African place, whose agenda has not yet materialised and which positions itself in opposition to the past. This was also reflected in what my informants Sabelo (2006-04-21), Ntokoso (2006-04-28) and Mpho (2006-10-30) told me.

Clayton S. Holliday objected strongly to the renaming in *The Witness* and drew on the history of Pietermaritzburg, the museum, Afrikaners and the honouring of the vow, an aspect that he believed did not change because of time. Holliday wrote:

I was appalled to hear in the news that the name of this historic building has been changed to Msunduzi Museum. This name has absolutely nothing to do with the Voortrekkers, the church or the wonderful historical collection housed in this unique museum. I am aware that the museum was transferred to the government as a national museum and later became a national monument. But changing name is an abuse of power and privilege, blatant racism and a deliberate distortion of traditions, history and trust. This needs to be resisted at every level. Soon there will be no names associated with our past and the history of this country (Holliday 2007-11-26).

Holliday's rejection is in keeping with the current general trend of renaming streets and buildings in South Africa. The renaming is targeted to promote redress and reconciliation. Sithole (2007-05-26) argued that renaming is one thing that enraged and divided South Africans and is seen more as an administrative, political and technical device that is not meaningful. The names that have generally been chosen tend to be names that are associated with 'the struggle', and with recent or current political figures, and in many cases the renaming has not been culturally sensitive.

On 26th October 2007 the minister of DAC, Dr Pallo Jordan, was to change the Msunduzi Museum (VM) name officially. Although staff-members had since 2006 referred to the museum as the Msunduzi Museum, the act of having an official renaming constituted a specific meaning and reflected the museum's relationship with the current government. Through the ritual of inviting government officials to change the name, the museum confirmed Transformation. This act also constitutes structural ownership over the institution where the government in a ritualisation physically manifests its power and claims belonging. Although it had been a multicultural institution for some time, governmental officials emphasised that it was not that in the past. This played a role in the political rhetoric to highlight the name as a tangible proof of Transformation. The museum in the eyes of the government needed to prove that it was far removed from the colonial and apartheid past.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the minister could not participate in the event on 26th October 2007 and it was therefore postponed till 2nd November 2007, but that date also did not suit the minister and it was moved to 3rd November. But the minister was tied up in Cape Town on that date and never appeared at the ceremony. This caused dissatisfaction among my informants, and it can be questioned whether the minister's absence and unavailability was proof of his lack of interest in a former Afrikaner institution. It seemed clear that my informants interpreted his behaviour as such and they made sarcastic jokes suggesting that the minister's absence was proof that the name should not change after all.

The eventual renaming ceremony was done in a spirit of multiculturalism. Entertainment from Indian, Afrikaner and Zulu communities was provided. Peter Nel (2007-10-03) called the renaming a very historic moment in the history of the museum. Thokozani Dlamini,¹⁰⁰ representing Zanele Hlatshwayo,¹⁰¹ read the minister's speech (Hlatshwayo 2007-10-03). It reconnected the re-naming to the struggle, IKS, multiculturalism and participation since the name-change opened the museum to whoever wished to visit it. While reading the speech the museum activated a power-point presentation flashing the sentence 'The name can change but the history will remain' – a sentence that I interpret as an assurance that the Voortrekker Complex would not be neglected and neither would the history of any other 'cultural groups'. Despite this assurance, Dlamini managed to forget that the museum was now called the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex and called it Msunduzi Museum, which caused some discontent among some of the staff-members. They continued to debate amongst themselves whether the Voortrekker Complex is part of the name and will not simply fade into insignificance.

5.5 What was Transformation of place?

The meaning associated with the museum is connected to the urban landscape, names, socio-political structures and agents. Creating a complex historically conditioned and constantly changing meaning is important to understand when investigating museum Transformation. The two museums became a contested place because of manifold imbued meanings and through the name given to the place. The many meanings that 'cultural groups' applied to the urban landscape is a crucial part of the understanding of the museum as a place. Museological discourse and narratives have created a position for the museum as highly contested – a position based, e.g., on an assumption of the place as reflecting oppressive power due to its position in the former White urban landscape.

The Natal Museum was constructed in a predominantly anglophile area and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) in a predominantly Afrikaner area of the urban landscape. The two museums have been narrated as White enclaves due to the spatial segregation during apartheid. Yet the town during colonial times was multicultural and during apartheid Indians resided in parts of the town. This associated meaning contributed to an entrenched sense of ownership. The

¹⁰⁰ Deputy mayor of the Msunduzi Municipality.

¹⁰¹ Mayor of the Msunduzi Municipality.

museums were seen as White places for White people. This was regarded as necessary to alter during Transformation because it had negative associations.

The meaning of the place is not constructed by just one group, but also by people who do not use the place. Drawing on Massey (1994: 120, 147) and Tilley (1993: 82), I assert that the identity and group references of places are located in a socio-political dimension that constitutes meaning. People control and reproduce meaning according to group relations; therefore Whites were not solely responsible for the association of the museums as contested and for exclusive places. The narrative of museums as belonging to Whites was upheld and furthered by other groups, who all acted on the meanings embraced by White dominance, and applied this narrative to the museums.

Since the two museums were constructed, controlled and predominantly used by Whites, they became White places and were experienced as inaccessible. Because Whites had through political power subjugated and controlled other groups, this subtext was applied to the museum. Place forms memory, memory forms place, and the urban landscape and the museum remind people of an oppressive past. The contested meaning the museum held during apartheid and at present was a constructed narrative of groups who were not White. The more positive meaning that Whites are associated with museums is at present not expressed in the dominant narrative. To acknowledge that museums have always had multicultural meanings makes the framing of place less statically associated with oppression, and a constructive multicultural museum discourse can be generated.

There is sometimes a discrepancy between museological and political discourses and ethnographic reality. It is therefore important to analyse how Transformation locates itself. This can be unlocked if place is analysed in a temporal historical sequence, for this approach becomes a crucial discursive tool to clarify perceptions of museums. Museum Transformation was about altering and gives to museums new positive meanings which are visualised in museum activities. Political rhetoric, however, continues to lock the museum in a discourse of segregation.

Change is carried out practically by employing a multiracial work-force to initiate different decision processes and representations and to encourage new audiences to visit museums. En-racing museums make them seem more multicultural as the visitor can relate to the people

employed which will produce an experience of ownership of the museums. Transformation of place means changing the sense of ownership, going from a place experienced as exclusively belonging to Whites to a place belonging to a multicultural South Africa.

Museums are places dedicated to knowledge and are therefore symbolic of the culture in which that knowledge is produced (Cameron 2004: 76, Radley 1991: 71). I argue that the museum architecture manifests a symbiotic relationship with the group that produced it. Yates (1989: 249-262) argues that taxonomy and science underline the provision of culture, in this case eurocentric culture. The meaning of place is connected to how activities, collections and displays are related to architecture and how people act it out. The museum has produced eurocentric scientific knowledge and the building has become a symbol of control shaped by Whites. Radley (1991: 69) argues that the building is not just a container but a connective tissue of the display. I argue that the museum's architecture and displays reflect a symbiotic relationship, where the architecture stipulates taxonomy, the order of displays and bodily movement through the museum.

When the eurocentric architecture is acted on, the classification is translated, understood and becomes part of the cultural identity of the visitor. Multiple versions of eurocentrism vary, depending on who experiences them and they become a lived experience. The architecture as seen in the Natal Museum bolsters the classification of objects and in the Msunduzi Museum the Church of Vow display hall amplifies the religious connection. My informant David (2006-04-24) explained that the building also stipulated the design of the display.¹⁰² For him the display would ideally imitate the architecture as it was necessary for building and artefact to work together in unity. The displays in this way of assessment become related to the building and add further meanings to the place.¹⁰³

The museums, as a place, are in constant conflict because the meaning of colonialism, apartheid, and Transformation are narrated simultaneously. Political and museological discourses continuously emphasise the malevolence of colonial and apartheid time, making it difficult to communicate the museum as a democratic place. Since Whites attached an overall positive meaning to museums, it is predominantly Africans, Indians and Coloureds who need to reconcile with the place. The museum needs to be reconciled and meaning changed among

¹⁰² Which can be connected to Radley's (1991: 69) argument.

¹⁰³ This assessment was realised in the display 'A river runs through it...Msunduzi'.

those groups to whom it is contested. If they reconcile, and as Transformation progresses, museums will appear as democratic places.

The two museums are doing exceptional work to change the contested meanings of the place. This is most visible through the educational work of the two museums, as they are changing the younger generation's association that has not been influenced by preconceived positioning and values. The two museum's educational departments are reshaping the learners' perception of the museum and making it their place.

CHAPTER 6. COLLECTIONS CAPTURED IN TIME

This chapter deals with Transformation in collections in the Natal and Msunduzi Museums and investigates its consistency, associated meaning and classification. It also considers how socio-political structures across time and space have affected selection of collected material. I will explore how material culture was interpreted ‘in’ times of collecting and reinterpreted ‘in’ other times, focusing mainly on the period 1980-2007.

Fabian (1983: 20, 41) holds that material culture helps concretise time, as it encapsulates social systems. Museums collect because of their awareness of the finitude of time, therefore collection is about capturing and materialising time in sequences, spatialising it and making it comprehensible. This is similar to Fabian’s (1983: 74) ‘temporalization’. I also follow Giddens (1984: 133), who suggests that agents are not only ‘in’ time and space but create the time and space they are ‘in’. Collections materialise socio-political structures and situate them ‘in’ time and space. Therefore, drawing on Munn (1992: 103) I suggest that collecting is a ‘time-reckoning’ that visualises cultural categories, time and space. Collections (I draw on Massy (1994: 3, 147)) are time-space compressions – movement and communications across space. Following Fabian (1983: 42, 52, 78), Giddens (1981: 30) and Massey (1994: 264), I suggest that temporal movement is also movement in space which is materialised in collections. Positioning collections in relation to time makes it possible to understand the multivocality and discrepancy of Transformation.

The Natal Museum consists of four different collections: the ethnographic collection, the cultural history collection, the archaeological collection and the natural history collection.¹⁰⁴ Following Pearce (1989: 127-128, 1992: 87) and Porter (1991: 109), I believe that objects are assembled because they represent something: an agenda, a relation, age or gender. Meaning is created in the absence and presence of material culture and materialises ideologies and socio-political positions. Collections are therefore a way to raise a point and a way of thinking.

The ethnographic collection in the Natal Museum is a representation of African and South African material culture, especially traditional rural objects, not contemporary urban

¹⁰⁴ This collection will not be discussed.

objects. The collection has been acquired through donations, research and purchase. Crafted objects were assembled, e.g., beadwork as part of initiation rites, decorations, weddings etc. Weapons, music instruments, religious objects and cloths were assembled together with objects that connected to the domestic sphere such as meat platters, sleeping mats and headrests. Male objects are connected to the adult population while female objects are connected to different stages in womanly life. Children are represented through some beadwork and toys. Male objects mainly centre on the male role as warriors and cattle-herders and are connected to the beer-ceremony. Female objects are connected to the domestic and religious sphere. Minor or no representation is found of males working in sugarcane plantations, as migrant labourers, as mine-workers or in the academic sphere. The case of females is similar and children are not represented through school activities. In general there are few representations of Africans living in townships or towns/suburbs.

The cultural history collection in the Natal Museum represented White heritage but included struggle material, Chinese and Indian material, and some interviews collected from Coloureds. Material was mostly donated but in some cases purchased. The material culture from Coloureds was minute and my informant Sahra (2004-10-05) stated that the administration of the museum was not interested in collecting it. Struggle material consisted mainly of different kinds of signs, T-shirts, pamphlets and placards from demonstrations, mainly connected to the election in 1994. Indian material culture was mainly collected from India, but some represented South African Indians. Chinese material was mainly collected from China and not from South African Chinese. The representation of White heritage consisted of objects from the late 1800s and the 1900s. Most objects had been manufactured, but there were some craft objects. The majority of the material represents the domestic sphere such as kitchen utensils. Uniforms are another large group consisting of male military uniforms representing official roles in society and school uniforms. Christian robes, bibles, and wedding dresses represent religion and rites de passage. Dentist and doctor's equipment represent the economic upper-class; the economic lower-classes are scarcely represented. My informant Sahra (2004-10-05) agreed that most objects were related to official and military roles. Children were more extensively represented than in the ethnographic collection through toys and school uniforms. Female objects represented domestic activities; men were represented through their role as farmers. Both the ethnographic and cultural history collections show norms and values represented in the material around which the society was centred 'in' different times.

The archaeological collection consists of material culture mainly from KwaZulu-Natal. Some material has been donated, but most of it has been collected through archaeological excavations and reflects the research in the museum. The material consists of both Stone Age and Iron Age tools, ceramics, bones and different organic material. There is also a collection of rock art in the form of parts of cliffs and in the form of photographs and drawings.

The Msunduzi Museum collection is smaller, consists of one collection and is dominated by White Afrikaner heritage representing the Great Trek and the Republic of Natalia. It consists of mainly Voortrekker objects represented through bonnets, bibles, robes and kitchen utensils. It holds more crafted objects than manufactured ones, and represents the economic middle and lower classes. There are fewer uniforms and more female objects than in the Natal Museum's collection. The later collection activities are less related to the Voortrekkers. Contemporary material, e.g., computers and school uniforms, are incorporated. Struggle material is represented through contemporary political activities such as posters, placards, and voting ballots. Indians are scarcely represented, but the collection has expanded through field research in the Hindu Indian community. Coloureds are beginning to be represented through work with the displays and a call for objects in *The Witness* (see Dell 2008-06-05). My informant David (2006-11-08) said that there was no material culture that he could explicitly connect to Coloured heritage, as he could do in the case of White, Indian and African material culture, and that this was the reason for not collecting it. African material culture was represented through mainly traditional rural material culture such as beadwork and traditional kitchen utensils. Most of these were produced and collected after 1994 and represented artefacts for the tourist industry. Indian, Coloured and African material culture was collected from Transformation, but Afrikaner material culture was collected from the museum's inception.

6.1 Contested collections

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) relied on donations from Afrikaners materialising memories of the Great Trek. According to letters, the DRC was responsible for the collection (letter from Shawe 1912-02-27), and the museum was established as an institution housing Voortrekker history (letter from Secretary of the Voortrekker Museum 1933-10-17). Mkhize and Mapalala (2002) describe the collection as being biased with no acknowledgement of Africans and as

representing the hegemonic interest of Afrikaners. In Mkhize and Mapalala's proposal there is a strong political and nationalistic agenda that taints their view of the collection. The museum policy was to represent Afrikaner heritage, not to represent Africans or for that matter Indians or Coloureds – groups that the writers neglect in their criticism. This collection was about belonging and was a materialisation of Afrikaner values located 'in' the specific time of collecting, forming a framework for a tradition of collecting. My field research has shown that African objects existed in the collection as early as 1910.¹⁰⁵ African material culture in the collection was never intended to represent Africans, but to show a relationship between Afrikaners and Africans. The items were rather memory traces of events concerning Afrikaners and not Africans.

Afrikaners and in general Whites donated to the museums. The material culture that mirrors Whites' relation to self and other in the society must therefore be seen in relation to the socio-political environment. Appadurai (1986: 11, 31), Frow (1997: 125) and Pearce (1995: 369) hold that donations became important for the understanding of a flow of social relations and for the social messages that transmit complex forms of knowledge. Donations create a bond between the museums and the givers and their role in society which defines the social relationship. They further position the material culture in the museum on the socio-political structures of society, depending on aspects of race, class and gender. Pearce (1995: 181-183), Attfield (2000: 135) and Kavanagh (1989: 127-128) argue that material culture represents knowledge about the world and how the museum presents knowledge as an act of dominance and control. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection materialised White interests 'in' time and is a reflection of a White society. Even African material culture mirrors White interests and becomes part of the understanding of White heritage rather than African heritage. This explains the norms and values that Whites created for themselves and others 'in' that time.

My field research has shown that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) received similar objects from the earliest days of the collection until the present. Material such as photographs, bibles, books and bonnets were donated by Afrikaner families to the museum. Pearce (1995: 243) explains that material from a personal past is able to express and embody profound meaning and deep feeling. In the Msunduzi Museum (VM) the relationship between the donors and the material culture socially constructed what was considered a Voortrekker object. The objects

¹⁰⁵ A bracelet from King Dingane's army.

inherited an Afrikaner identity through the narratives, but objects were no different from the material culture of other White communities. An Afrikaner object was constructed through the meaning given to the object in relationship to the donor and the museum's concept as a place. In the 1960s the Natal Museum collected similar objects, but in this collection they represented anglophile heritage. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) embodied the donors and the donors' relation to the Great Trek. Tolia-Kelly (2003: 326) holds that a relationship with material culture signals loss of land and a way of life. The material culture that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) desired, consolidated, and entrenched reflected thoughts of itself. According to Giliomee (2003), the Voortrekkers kept slaves and there were Coloureds on the Treks. I conclude that Coloureds and slaves were not seen as part of the museum's self-expression and were therefore not collected. The collection was intended to be subjective and represent the memory of the Great Trek embodied in donations. It was thus a way to reaffirm Afrikaner identity and faith.

The Natal Museum collection started as an amateur collection within the Natal Society and was later transferred to the museum in 1904, becoming a scientific collection (NMAR 1904-1924, Brooks 1988: 114). The museum had an active and passive collection policy, and donations and names of donors were published in the Annual Report (1904-1924), and according to Brooks (1988: 114), also in *The Natal Witness*. Brooks (1988: 60-65) argues, like Pieterse (2005: 164), that everything was welcomed into the collection and nothing was considered unimportant. The reason was most likely that the museum needed to acquire material and that once it had a collection it could be more selective. Once the Natal Museum was established the collection character changed, focusing on objective scientific principles that treated material culture as if it was essential truths that could be narrated. Although the museum was perceived as a natural history museum, there existed from its inception an ethnographical collection that consisted of African, 'settler', 'Boer' and Indian material.¹⁰⁶ The Annual Report (1905) refers to it as the exhibited collection.

Donations were important to the museum and the police authorities played a large part in the Natal Museum collection process. On demand they forwarded all African articles that had been confiscated, like a 'native' blacksmith's complete outfit (NMAR 1905). The Union defence forces also assembled material from the military campaigns and the museum received

¹⁰⁶ The ethnographic collection was larger than the natural history collection.

donations from governors and monasteries (NMAR 1904-1915). This shows a White institutional network across Africa that, by exchange connected to colonisation, produced knowledge about Africans and other groups. The museum was part of a social system and structures which controlled symbolic material.

The Natal Museum expressed a great interest in African material culture. In the first and following Annual Report of the Natal Museum, Ernest Warren wrote that he found it significant to collect African culture because:

it must be pointed out, that it is of the outmost importance, that such specimen of native workmanship should be produced at once for in the near future in Zululand and Natal the use of these things will completely die out, as unfortunately from an ethnologist point of view, the native population is being very profoundly modified by its contacts with the white man (NMAR 1904, 1905, 1907).

This prompted the active procurement of objects from Zululand by the Natal Museum together with the 'native' clerk Mr Kambule (NMAR 1904). It is uncertain how much involvement Mr Kambule had in the collection and documentation process. If he was a decision-maker it makes the collection representative of an African self. The collection was a reflection of an African choosing African material culture while working within a colonial institution.

Since most of the African material culture that existed in the museum related to this period, and was collected in these socio-political structures, it became contested in post-1994 museums. The material related to imperial institutions whose activities vigorously subjugated African people. Simpson (1996: 247) holds that colonial collection campaigns contributed to the cultural decline of indigenous people. To transfer commodities to the museum in warfare, as the Union defence forces did, has (drawing on Appadurai (1986: 26)) a special symbolic intensity, since it transfers parts of the enemy to the museum. The collection interpreted 'in' the time of Transformation, therefore, triggered social memory of loss of cultural identity, right, land and power. Yet Kavanagh (1989: 130) holds that the material culture could only be of real significance if the symbols had currency and meaning in the social environment in which they existed. In the present they represent the time under which racial segregation was implemented, a situation from which the current political dispensation wanted to distance itself.

Brooks (1988, 2005) regarded the museum as a colonial archive and my informant Thabang (2006-04-04) expressed the belief that the public might understand this as showing that the museum kept its artefacts away from the public and especially away from Africans. During the early days, however, the collection was not hidden in archives, but was shown and collected for display. Lack of storage is important for the discussion of the early collection and shows that 'settler' objects played a minor role in the museum and were withdrawn from display due to lack of space and because the museum wanted to show African material culture (NMAR 1909-1924). Yanni (1999: 149) holds that English natural history museums had not been architecturally designed for holding collections; material culture was meant to be displayed. This also affected the material that was accepted into the museum. Much later the director of the Natal Museum said to *The Natal Witness* that 'the Natal Museum collections are so big that they have been scattered on old exhibits or not shown at all' (Rennie 1986-05-27).

Yanni (1999: 149) holds that objects in display collections usually had minimal description or no labels at all. My field research has shown that there were similarities between Yanni's statement and the museum's classification of material. The classification was an ongoing process between the curator and the public, since the architecture contributed to the classification. Simpson (1996: 92) holds that the manner in which artefacts were collected during colonisations resulted in poor documentation. The Natal Museum, in the Annual Reports (1904, 1905, 1906), expressed an interest in documenting artefacts, indigenous names and research patterns of beadwork and the history of objects in general in order to fill gaps and find out more about different groups. My field research has shown that the early collected material culture lacked sufficient documentation and was interpreted during Transformation as numb, as a symbol of White domination and as neglecting or misrepresenting heritage. At the present time, however, collections play a role in the rediscovery of African roots in line with the African Renaissance and in using the colonial collections in museums for nationalistic purposes as a rhetorical tool to argue against White domination and as proof of past African civilisations.

Gore (2004: 28-34) argues that 'settler' collections in the 20th century grew as a proof of White domination. He continues that Africans were explicitly denied a history and that artefacts were not traced to African groups, but were collected as examples of taxonomic principles and as part of the flora and fauna. In the Natal Museum African, 'settler', 'Boer',

and Indian material was classified as ethnographic and incorporated in the same collection. Both the Natal and Msunduzi Museum (VM) had numerical classification systems under which numbers were given to the objects at point of entry. In its displays, however, the Natal Museum reclassified objects into different themes (NMAR 1905) based on information about the objects. There were therefore multiple classification systems in existence and following Gathercole (1989: 74), I believe that classification systems modify objects from mere things to objects with a specific meaning.

The Natal Museum was interested in preserving African heritage and aimed to do an objective empirical study of it. The same taxonomical idea that was applied to African material culture was also applied to White material culture. The polarisation of nature and culture symbolising chaos-order is an underlying connotation in how Gore (2004) interprets African material culture. Gore's model suggests that the place, the natural history museum, stipulated the context in which material culture should be interpreted. If African material culture was considered flora and fauna in this context, ironically, White material culture would also be considered flora and fauna in the Natal Museum. Yet Gore would never suggest that Whites be denied history or be equated with animals – as he does to Africans – since Whites were in power of representation in museums. In museums in the past there was not a distinction between natural and human sciences as there is today. It was a case of taxonomical principles articulating a eurocentric museum structure rather than an active cultural subjugation of heritage. Gore (2004) is part of a post-colonial critique that has the aim of stripping the museum of its hierarchal position as a heritage authority. Gore's argument positions the collection in a socio-political context that exemplifies a point in a post-1994 discussion, but it does not correspond to the empirical material.

Whites desired certain kinds of things for a collection. Hence they created a system for collecting and copied and applied this when collecting African culture. The same kinds of things collected from Whites were collected from Africans. It is important to understand the White perception of the world in order to understand the perception of the other. According to Merleau-Ponty (2004: 406), the perception of the other is bound up with the self and that is how the other is understood. I argue that familiar references were used to classify and understand culture and material culture, and collections are a way of organising relationships and investigating the world. Cameron (2004:65) and Pearce (1992: 37, 56) hold that material culture was a socio-temporal testament of society and an extended self. Therefore Whites

extended the self into African heritage by collecting and classifying African material culture as they would White material culture and so created a familiar space.

Gore (2004) polarises Whites and Africans but the two concepts need to be better defined. Drawing on Hall (1992: 275-331), I hold that Whites can only be regarded as homogeneous and unified when juxtaposed to the other. Pearce (1995: 308-309) holds that most societies position themselves against the other to produce a self. Pearce (1992: 55-56) also claims that material culture represents a way to narrate selfhood. Gore (2004) can be located within Pearce's (1995: 314) remark that Whites, regardless of culture, class or creed, were seen as 'high culture' in collections. Africans were seen as matching European prehistory and as therefore primitive and 'low culture'. These options which I draw on Taborsky (1990: 56-57), were maintained and made normative because they created stability within the group and therefore existed as a structure over time. Comparing Africans with the self, Whites concluded that since African culture resembled the culture of pre-history, the African should be classified as pre-modern. This had political overtones because the heritages were not just culturally apart but temporally as well. Knowledge is power and power in the museum was expressed in documentation and classification. The White self was employed to explain African cultures and became a way to instil the power of White socio-political structure into African cultures, which was seen as highly problematic in Transformation and needed to be deconstructed.

The distance between the imagined self and the other is something that museums are at present trying to bridge by changing the classification of their collections; they wish to change the knowledge production and meaning of material culture. Yet at present the material culture collected during colonial times is seen as tainted by the high and low meaning assigned to Whites and Africans. The early collections are at present highly challenged and serve as a reference-point from which Transformation can be constructed and the past deconstructed. The rejection of colonial collections in Transformation must be regarded as a way to create a new self in the museum and new museum discourses. My field research has shown that collections were interpreted as being static and that Whites were a static fixed-point from where others could be positioned. There are no static centres, however, and only change is consistent.

I claim that the Natal Museum did not intend in its earliest stages to show anglophile nationalism. They had no need to do so as the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu war and the Anglo-Boer war had made English-speakers the dominant group in the province; the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was in a different position. The collections aimed at an empirical study of material culture and showed a relationship in which English-speakers positioned themselves to other groups. Following Attfield (2000: 223), I hold that objects must be regarded in relation to identity and traditions to show how collectors make a connection to the past through material manifestations. Drawing on Massey (2005: 71), I believe that objects become authentic 'souvenirs' of the past. The representation of past spaces takes place through convening it into temporal sequences – challenging space through an imagination of time.

The early collection of the museum was particularly important for the understanding of the institution, since it articulated the interests and the type of material for further collecting activities. Time materialised itself in the collection. Material culture concretises time and encapsulates it in material culture which is then transferred into temporal repetitive patterns. Time also entrenched the identity of the other and the self and, with the implementation of segregation, the other became all that was different from the self, e.g., in retribalisation in opposition to urbanisation.

My field research has shown that at the same time as the depression, the growth of Afrikaner nationalism, and the strengthening of existing segregation laws in the 1930s, the collection of White material culture in the Natal Museum grew (NMAR 1930-1940), but that the donated objects in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) dropped to half as many. The idea of the museum as a cultural repository was at this point not activated and there seems to be no need to represent the self through material artefacts. The decline could also have been related to the economic crisis in the country. Pearce (1995: 181-183) and Attfield (2000: 135) hold that objects were part of an act of dominance and control and a powerful extension of the self. Therefore I claim that the emerging strong Afrikaner identity, which might not have required an active assemblage of material culture, expressed itself in building monuments. It was perhaps only in heritage crisis or in threat that the collection activities were initiated. The ethnographic collection in the Natal Museum was divided into two collections; the ethnographic collection, consisting of African and Indian material culture, and the cultural historic collection consisting of White material culture. The museum had previously made a division between

the ethnographic collection and the archaeological collection, but after 1930 that division was no longer made (NMAR 1932, 1933-1940).

The amendment of the *State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931* was a professionalisation of the museum sector that strengthened the status of the museum in the Union of South Africa. The museum's Board of Trustees was in charge of the collection, which was the core of the museum. The board was an extension of the minister's power, since it was elected by him. Collection activities were therefore officially undertaken to the government's liking. More importantly donation was not just regarded as giving to the museum, but as giving to the Union. The act therefore positioned the museum as an instrument at the core of the Union's cultural activities. There was reciprocity between socio-political developments and the museum, and it was at this time that a real division between White and African material culture was implemented and institutionalised, and not during the colonial period as other researchers have suggested.

6.2 Collections during apartheid

When White nationalism grew stronger in the 1940s, the Natal Museum archaeological and photographic collection grew. The museum also acquired crafted wooden objects from Zulus and stated again its interest in objects without European influence (NMAR 1940-1949). The photographic collection can be connected to Gore's (2004) statement that paper collection was only representative of a small segment of the society. The Natal Museum, however, showed little interest in collecting White objects and was therefore not generally representative of Gore's statement.

The *Du Toit Report* (1949: 150) wanted to professionalise the collecting activities so that the museum would not become static. The report wanted the museum to focus on aspects of White heritage that included modes of life such as dwellings and houses, medical supplies, communication objects of daily use, work, transport, mining business, banking, objects showing the social consequences of mechanical discovery, weapons, relics of war, treaties, laws, intellectual pursuits, instruments and religion. The *Du Toit Report* (1949: 49, 194-195, 200) noted the very small number of industrial and historical items on exhibit and stressed the need for collecting industrial material culture especially. The suggested objects represented advancement in society, the uprising from the 1930s depression and differences from

Africans. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection, drawing on Kopytoff (1986: 70-74, 81), singularised certain objects – meaning that objects showed a collective, shared order and approval of the meaning of the group. Material culture such as bonnets, bibles, rifles, waistcoats and patchwork made up the symbolic manifestation of Afrikanerdom. When activated these symbols created a relationship with the world and became active signifiers of meaning. This was White nationalism, caring for and collecting aspects of a progressing culture and emphasising aspects that set them apart from the rest of the population.

The *Du Toit Report* (1948: 164) also stressed the importance of having a curator who cared for the collection. This suggests that they would not just collect White heritage, but would carefully preserve it in a framework of professionalised science. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection policy fitted the report's recommendation, but failed in its collection activities (Du Toit 1949:54). This shows that the role of the museums in White nationalism was more multifaced than expected. The *Du Toit Report* (1949: 164) recognised that White researchers posed a disadvantage when collecting material culture from African groups and called for Africans to train as ethnologists for the museums. This statement deconstructs to a certain extent the post-colonial critique that the museum has been subject to. The collecting activities during that time were made with an awareness of bias within the museum sector to collection issues and collecting policies relating to the other's material culture. This was not a new phenomenon during Transformation but was an issue that museums had dealt with before. Despite this, no effort was made to employ an African ethnologist to enhance the collection and its representation in the Natal Museum.

The Natal Museum was mostly interested in African material culture, but during the 1950s a collection of Indian weapons and Chinese objects was incorporated in the ethnographic collection (NMAR 1951, 1955). Its incorporation into this collection shows that this material culture was regarded as other. At the same time the museum donated 115 rifles and guns to the National War Museum in Johannesburg (NMAR 1951, 1955). Museums in South Africa started to participate in a nation-building process and the Natal Museum's donation is part of a joint effort to establish cohesive collections. It also shows that the Natal Museum was not predominantly interested in collecting White heritage.

In the 1960s director John Pringle¹⁰⁷ recognised that (White) farming culture had started to disappear in the region. He expressed a need to collect material culture representing this heritage and encouraged older citizens of Pietermaritzburg to record their life stories and hand them in to the museum (NMAR 1960, 1961, 1962). The Annual Reports show that the museum had prepared a list of objects that were needed for the development of the display in the *History Hall*.¹⁰⁸ The call for donations can be noted in a quotation from *The Natal Witness* at the opening of the display. The administrator of the Natal Museum, Ben Havemann, said that ‘people should avail themselves of the opportunity to make a personal contribution to the unique Hall of Natal History’ (*The Natal Witness* 1972-10-08). The museum gave Whites an opportunity to immortalise themselves in the museum by donating objects that represented them, their family and their community.

My field research has shown that no material in this collection had been purchased and that the majority of donations were given by women and contained domestic commodities. Furniture was donated from institutions such as the National Education Department. My informant Sahra (2004-11-15) held that purchased material in the museum was connected to African material culture. This collection shows that the museum continued to regard collections as something that needed to be displayed and not collected for the sake of ‘time-reckoning’. This meant that material culture and its relation to the public in exhibitions as displaying symbols was more important than the collection itself. No similar emphasis was made to collect from other groups, but future collecting activities show similar appeals to Indians. It was only in relation to much later collections of struggle material that Africans were addressed. What is important with the drive of collecting White material culture is that it contributed to the museum being classified as ‘own affairs’ in the 1980s, although according to policy it should have been classified as ‘general affairs’.

Drawing on Pearce (1995: 159), Knell (2004: 20) and Clifford (1999: 60-61) I hold that collections like above are collected to show a controlled common identity. The collection was further a control of the expression of the self, in this case a White anglophile identity. The collection of White heritage in the Natal Museum took place at a time when apartheid segregation laws were consolidated. Material culture could therefore be regarded as nation-building symbols, drawing on Afrikaner nationalism that focused on a disappearing farming

¹⁰⁷ Director of the Natal Museum 1953-1976.

¹⁰⁸ Also referred to as the *Hall of Natal History*.

community reconnecting to national romantic ideals of the peasant, manifesting traditional values, and re-establishing them in a changing environment.

Roodt-Coetzee (1966: 4) argued that the Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection was in the past impressive, but in 1966 when he compared it to other collections he found it limited. Nor was he impressed with the classification, and the only thing to his satisfaction was the collection of paper material and books. Roodt-Coetzee's report was part of an investigation to prepare the *Cultural Institutions Act 29 of 1969* that was similar in many ways to the *State-aided Institutions Act 23 of 1931*. In the new act the council's main area of responsibility was to receive, hold and preserve collections that were placed under its care and management. In the act the objects are specified as given to the government and the Republic's inhabitants to benefit them, so that museums at this time clearly functioned as repositories of important objects. The status of the museum in relation to the government cannot be doubted in this case. This must be considered in relation to the fact that Whites were regarded as members of the republic. In this context the objects that were preserved in the museums can be read as benefiting Whites.

6.3 Towards transformed collections

The 1970s were marked by professionalisation in museums and the Natal Museum established an archaeological department which my informant Monica (2006-03-10) regarded as the first step of Transformation. Maggs (1993) states that in the 1970s (KwaZulu) Natal was described as the 'Cinderella of archaeology', since very little was known about its prehistory. The establishment of the archaeological department in the Natal Museum provided professional archaeological investigations of the province's history and collected objects. History was no longer the domain of natural scientists but of professional archaeologists. Archaeological material that had been donated to the museum represented uncontextualised finds placed in the ethnographic collection. The material was subsequently reclassified to an archaeological collection, a shift which proved important since it implied that African culture was not timeless but dynamic and was a tool to re-present history in the museum.

My field research has shown that when the archaeological department was established in the 1970s, the donations dropped in number. This illustrates that the institution invested in research rather than in the public's interest and that this changed the representation of material

culture. This was further institutionalised and reinterpreted to match research objectives. Shepherd (2003: 836) holds that in the 1970s professional and amateur archaeologists opposed each other as archaeology became more professionalised. These debates coincide with the decrease of donated archaeological objects in the Natal Museum. I hold that when national Transformation started, the museum collection was not a scattered Victorian collection to subjugate Africans, but a professional collection with research objectives.

Following Lowenthal's (1996) division of history and heritage, I conclude that the Natal Museum developed according to governmental requirements of scientific research while the Msunduzi Museum (VM) continued to be a heritage site located in between a professional and voluntary management. In the 1970s the Msunduzi Museum (VM) encouraged the people to donate objects and therefore established a group to try and enhance its collection (VMAR 1972). In the museum heritage was connected to the public and was therefore an extension of the self. The Natal Museum represented a White scientific culture, and the professionalisation prompted an unexpected critique of previous history-writing. There was a discrepancy between the state's intended heritage development and the outcome of research. This has not been acknowledged in Transformation and it calls for an investigation of apartheid cultural heritage policies and how they were interpreted by the advocates of Transformation.

The *Niemand Report* (1975: 2) stated that most cultural history collections in the country were inadequate, or at best incomplete, either because of a scarcity of cultural items or because the desired items were no longer donated and had to be bought at auctions. The report stated that material (except for that in the Natal Museum) was stored inadequately and described the conditions as appalling. The critique during Transformation portrayed the museums as static institutions pleasing to the government and which did not need to be changed. But the *Niemand Report* shows harsh criticism of museums and holds several similarities with the critique proposed during Transformation. This means that the critique was not time-specific, but place-specific. This means that the critique was specific to the conditions of the museums and not specific to Transformation and departure from apartheid. The *Niemand Report* gives an understanding of how collections could ideally have functioned during apartheid, and it needs to be acknowledged as leading up to rather than hindering Transformation.

At the same time as the *Niemand Report*, the Natal Museum established a department of ethno-archaeology in 1975. According to Demmer (2004: 11), the department was to better

care for the ethnographic collection and investigate the similarities between society and patterns in the material culture of the Nguni-speaking people. According to Maggs (1993: 73), this was to explore the boundaries between archaeology and anthropology. Now the two collections were integrated in scientific research projects and became part of a larger flow of knowledge.

In 1978 the Natal Museum realised that porcelain could be dated to within a few years, coinciding with the discovery of shipwrecks along the Natal and Transkei (Eastern Cape) coast that predated 1655¹⁰⁹ (*The Natal Witness* 1978-12-16). These shipwrecks did not just give an account of Whites, but of how groups interacted and exchanged knowledge and goods with each other. The archaeologist could, through White material culture, research the development of African groups. This repositions the porcelain from being White material culture to giving accounts of African heritage. It demonstrates how material culture can travel through value spheres, how it can be reinterpreted numerous times, and how it is socially constructed and depends on socio-political structures. Drawing on Jordan (2003: 21), I suggest that interpretations of material culture across time-space are a network of power and knowledge to gain a sense of selfhood. The narrative that the curator constructed of these objects represented an embryo to the nation-building agenda that would form around 1994. Change was therefore dependent on an individual decision materialised in collections. For Transformation these aspects became important and difficult to deal with, because curators were used to the polarisation between races.

At present the concept of African heritage is far from resolved and shows that multiculturalism did not fit the concept of Transformation. For my informant, African heritage was material from indigenous people in South Africa; he held that museums should reflect African and not White material culture since people would be confused by coming to the museum without knowing the context in which it existed, whether African or European (Thabang 2006-04-04). This view was shared by the Director of Heritage and Museums Service in KwaZulu-Natal, Dolly Khumalo, who said in an interview in *The Witness* that ‘you should not go to a museum in this country and see someone else’s culture and not your own’ (Von Klemperer 2005-03-18). This view shows a static approach to heritage as separate and segregated with no room for multiculturalism. The classification of culture that my informant

¹⁰⁹ The year South Africa was allegedly founded.

and Khumalo represented is very close to the entrenched ideas of apartheid and far from the multicultural approach that DAC emphasises. The multiculturalism promoted by DAC had not yet crystallised in collections because people (no matter their race) have a strong entrenched thinking of group identity that they apply to material culture and because the boundary of classification hindered multicultural material which had to be classified in the Natal Museum between different groups.

There was a discrepancy between the development in the Natal Museum and the *Niemand Report* (1975) which suggests that cultural history – White history – should form separate museums. This suggestion was the embryo of the ‘own affairs’ and ‘general affairs’ concept and a way to safeguard White heritage. It was an expression of power and borderlines and a way to separate White heritage from African heritage. The Natal Museum reacted to the report in 1981 (Stuckenberg 1981) and made suggestions to develop a collection along academic, curatorial and acquisitive lines and to incorporate Indian material culture in the collection. Opening the cultural history collection to Indian material was one of the museum’s first steps in deconstructing the collection’s classification of cultural history and ethnography and in acknowledging Indian heritage as self-expression. The Natal Museum suggested a focus on (KwaZulu) Natal, similar to a recommendation of the *Du Toit Report* (1949) and a focus on domestic, ephemeral objects, but states that agricultural equipment, machinery and buildings should not be accessioned.

The focus on Natal was a professionalisation but also a way to define anglophile White heritage. Emphasising domestic appliances could be a way to resolve a problem of lack of space. Collecting domestic appliances was a way of connecting to the home as a safe place in the world in the turbulent 1980s. Disregarding farming equipment, which has strong symbolism in Afrikanerdom, was a way to manifest anglophile urban heritage. The *Niemand Report* (1975) made provision for a cultural history department, established in 1989 in Natal Museum. In time the cultural history department would also challenge White dominance, but during its inception it would focus on colonial military aspects which could be seen embodying an enlargement of patriarchal anglophile identity.

6.4 Collections in an emerging Transformation

The *Cultural Institutions Amendment Act 25 of 1983* made it difficult for museums to function in an emerging multicultural society. The Natal Museum, however, attempted to collect Indian material culture (NMAR 1988/1989), a project influenced by Director Stuckenberg's involvement in the erection of the Gandhi statue in Pietermaritzburg and by an Indian member of the museum's Board of Trustees (Nigel 2006-04-11, NMAR 1988/1989). My informant wanted to collect historical Indian works of art and other ancient artefacts (Nigel 2006-04-11), and clearly wanted to collect Indian objects from India, not from South Africa. In other words, he was interested in the origin of the South African Indian heritage. Other material culture from other heritage was treated in the same way. The material culture represented origin; origin made heritage distinctive and thus easier to treat as separate units. The museum created and identified the South African Indians as being part of India rather than South Africa. This classification speaks clearly about how English-speakers saw themselves (as articulated by Crouch (2005-06-03)) as torn between two places and two identities - the English and the South African-English.

The 'home-country' served as a place to confirm identity in tangible and intangible aspects and was applied to other heritages when collecting. Material needed to be authenticated to function as a symbol and so did origin. According to Attfield (2000: 77-79), 'authenticate' means to legitimise an experience according to established principles and fundamental 'truths'. Authentic is an idea that includes aspects of longevity, history, tradition, origin and resistance to change. Authenticated material represents intangible values such as origin, stability and a conflict-free environment. When the Natal Museum only authenticated origins in other countries, it was emphasising a rejection of the heritage condition in South Africa by implying that its true heritage and belonging were located in another country.

My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) tried to collect material culture from Indian homes. He said he had 'false expectations' and regarded what he found as 'totally wrong' material to collect for the museum. The objects from Indians were 'junk' and 'souvenirs' and he was uninterested in statues of worship made locally. Pearce (1995: 297) holds that the value of material culture is considered in relation to age and technical skills. Pearce (1995: 188) further argues that material culture is linked to what it lacks or possesses. My informant apparently believed that Indian heritage in South Africa lacked traditionalism, technical skills, age and

economic value and he could therefore not authenticate it. The material he encountered in Indian homes was not what he thought represented Indian heritage. It is therefore not a question of what Indian heritage was, but rather of what my informant thought it was.

The museum had higher expectations of Indian than White material culture. The museum was interested in ancient, exotic and exclusive Indian heritage from India and not South Africa. White material culture was represented by everything from mended socks to weapons. This indicates that the White collection dealt with heritage rather than history (following Lowenthal 1996) and that there are sentiments connected to the artefacts. Indian heritage required authentication by White museum standards to represent heritage and be incorporated in the collection. The collection activity shows how separated 'cultural groups' were and the lack of knowledge that Whites had of other cultures. It also shows how preconceived thoughts stipulate what was collected and how the collection programme differed from material culture collected through anthropological research programmes.

My informant argued that instead of collecting antiques, Indians spent their money on weddings, saris and jewellery which according to him could not be collected (Nigel 2006-04-11). It is obvious that it is not Indian culture per se that the museum was out to collect, but rather an idea of what was Indian. According to Ebr.-Vally (2001: 146), marriage was a most important religious ceremony that symbolised the meeting of two families and the progression into adulthood. My informant touched on marriage items that were significant in Indian heritage and were therefore crucial to collect, but he turned them down. My field research has shown that several wedding dresses were donated to the cultural history collection, but the museum was not open to such Indian objects. Clifford (1999: 67) holds that collections are about what deserves to be remembered and treasured, whereas traditional artefacts are more valued than modern items. Incorporation of material culture from modern wedding ceremonies could have to do with the perception of gender, especially femininity, and what role this played for the museum.

Places of origin, as mentioned before, assume differences between people, culture and identity – something that was considered necessary in the 1980s. Whites needed something characteristic to compare themselves with. Choosing to collect differences and traditionalism in other cultures was a way to resolve the rootlessness in which Whites found themselves in the 1980s. This way of expressing identity was very similar to the collection activities post-

1994 when socio-political and cultural instability called for the collection of traditional material to find identities in the past to make up for the loss of identities in the present. In Transformation the struggle for democracy replaced origin as a marker of identity and emphasised the creation of a new myth of origin for South Africans. This built on old stereotypes of origin that manifested a joint beginning, multiculturalism and a departure from segregation. But it was ambiguous, since at the same time it rejected and affirmed values of segregation. The new materialisation of heritage was therefore an explanation materialised in objects that walked a cultural mine-field.

The Natal Museum collection visualised a materialisation of self-reflection and a negotiation of identity that started before apartheid fell. It was a way to find out what society represented in a tumultuous environment which would increase during Transformation. The post-structural idea changed the interpretation of collections and renegotiated the way that material culture was assembled, a way that gave room for post-apartheid negotiation of the collection which later assumed a representation of political suitability. Transformation started to develop quite rigid policies of what to collect and from where. It also started to implement new classification systems that contextualised and deconstructed previous classification systems. Yet the changes confirm old structures rather than challenge them. New policies were based on what kind of material was collected in the past and were also based on eurocentric classification systems.

New collection policies limited collecting to a local context. This worked in favour of the museum, since Transformation demanded a more local focus of the collection. My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) stated that the ethnographic collection in the Natal Museum, although the staff-members were very liberal politically, was never strong and relied on donations. The collection was fragmentary and there was no holistic approach to the material understanding of African societies. Therefore the museum for the first time began to purchase objects from Zulu culture to fill gaps in the collection (NMAR 1988/1989). Filling gaps in a collection and overseeing representations are in line with the ideas of new museology.

Wooden objects such as milkpails, headrests and spoons were the main interest together with a new focus on contemporary material. The museum showed an exploration of what it regarded as Zulu culture and a renegotiation of identity. But the interest in traditional material remained the core of attention. The museum noted problems similar to Ernest Warren's:

objects that did not have European influence had become scarce and had vanished from the local dealers (NMAR 1988/1989). There was still an underlying assumption that traditional material could explain cultures as distinctive, and it showed a search for an essential signifier that was assumed to be abstracted from the material culture. It also visualised an exploration for something that had been lost and a yearning for something original. Articulating the collector's heritage and exploration of something original projected onto the other's heritage. Although the museum might not have realised this, they started to question their culture of collection through donations with its attached problem of insufficient documentation (NMAR 1988/1989). The museum started to renegotiate White scientific ideas and put White heritage into new contexts. The renegotiations of African heritage came as a bonus rather than as an objective.

The new collection policy in 1989/1990 (NMAR 1989/1990), started to focus on collecting in the Tugela Valley because the area was a borderline between rural and urban areas, a landscape rich in traditions, and had for a long time been subject to conflict and faction fights (William 2006-03-06, Gustav 2006-11-07). Political affiliation played an important role in the collection activities. The ANC-governed areas were controlled by several committees that approved researchers' appeals to do collection or carry out research activities. My informant explained the situation as a long process flanked by suspicion towards him and his intentions. In Inkatha-controlled areas permission was sought from the chief, after which the researcher had no problems in the field and the process became much faster (Gustav 2006-11-07). Due to this, collecting activities in the 1990s were undertaken mostly in Inkatha-controlled areas which reflected on the material culture that was collected.

Inkatha encouraged a traditional way of life as did the apartheid government.¹¹⁰ Material culture therefore represented traditional values and a different social system from that in ANC-controlled areas that upheld socialist principles. Although the choice of area was a practical issue for my informant, it worked in line with the museum's idea of what was considered African heritage. Collecting ANC material culture infused ideological aspects of the ANC into the museum and into the self; a process which the mainstreamed cultural expression might not have been ready for at the time.

¹¹⁰ This issue will be further elaborated in Chapter 7.

It was more important for the museum to collect material culture and fill gaps in the collection than to consider the intangible meanings connected to such activity. But the local context in which collecting was undertaken broke with previous attempts to find common components in general African material cultures. Efforts now focused on differences within African cultures rather than on pan-African heritage and its juxtaposition to White heritage. Despite these developments Transformation emphasised pan-African heritage, not local contexts, because the BCM influenced ANC politics. There is therefore a discrepancy between the advances in ethnography in the late 1980s and the more static idea of heritage within Transformation politics.

Collecting African material culture during this period was not always easy, since part of KwaZulu was considered a 'no-go' area for Whites. To circumvent this problem the museum contacted African dealers to acquire material culture. Mrs H Zuma sold her beadwork and Mr A Mzila provided various material culture which the museum selected and purchased (NMAR 1989/1990). Representation becomes complex in this respect, since the museum made the choice of what Africans offered them. It was therefore a choice based on White scientific ideals and on material assemblage by African's interest. Africans were representing themselves through the medium of the museum just as Mr Kambule had done during the early 1900s. Acknowledging African participation in collecting activities gives a new dimension to the collection and resolved Transformation implications of Africans not having the right to represent themselves.

Self-representation was also dealt with in the museum project of traditional healers and social transformation in the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg initiated by my informant Gustav. The project connected to already existing themes in the collection, but aimed at collecting oral data, becoming a focus during Transformation as seen through *amasiko*. This project touched on self-representation since my informant Gustav, although White, was trained as a traditional healer by another group. Gustav (2006-11-07), however, argued that his role as a traditional healer had nothing to do with the material collected. Nevertheless his training may have provided him with a deeper understanding of the material culture. More importantly the project represented the multiculturalism of South African heritage. It visualised how complicated it was to classify material culture and people according to South African social borderlines of cultural distinctiveness.

The archaeological department of the Natal Museum formed the Institute for Cultural Resource Management in 1992, undertaking archaeological investigations in KwaZulu-Natal (Demmer 2004: 8). The material culture was collected as part of excavations performed in relation to an emerging urbanisation and infrastructure. It produced a slightly fragmentary picture of prehistory in comparison to more targeted research excavations. Archaeology became particularly important in Transformation because it produced a sense of belonging and self-worth by focusing on African heritage before colonialism.

6.5 Collections in a changing socio-political environment

MUSA defined the museum as collection-based and as the centre of museum activities; its responsibility was to interpret the cultural and natural world through real objects and convey knowledge about history, culture and technical skills (Pauw 1994: XIII). Odendaal et al (1994: 6) challenged this statement and argued that it had serious implications for historians dealing with periods where there were few surviving objects, e.g., the struggle period. *MUSA* represented the current museum and its Victorian foundation. Museums were primarily seen as displaying collections, not as mediating meaning; one of the fundamental changes during Transformation was the change to mediating meaning. Collection would no longer be the centre of activities, but would be supplanted by the relation with the public, mediating knowledge, values and intangible heritage.

MUSA argued for conservation of objects and called for a broader understanding of the activities from the general public and decision-makers in order to resolve the fragmented situation of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' (Pauw 1994: XVII). Collections, according to this view, embody heritage that *MUSA* wanted to extend and not change. Odendaal et al (1994: 6)¹¹¹ hold that there was much duplication in the collection of White material culture and there was a need for better policies. Odendaal (1994: 14) argued that the conscious or unconscious ideological factors of such collection were ignored and that no dynamic strategy or major innovation was suggested to counter-balance impediments from the past. Therefore *MUSA* safeguarded itself and proposed to collect from marginalised communities (Pauw 1996: 4-5). Although *MUSA* drew up guidelines how to care for collections, Odendaal (1994: 6) stressed a competent collection management with internationally recognised standards and practices in the museum.

¹¹¹ Arguing from an ANC perspective.

My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) feared that the museum structures would be completely overthrown in Transformation. Given that the ANC policy (Wilmot 1993) argued that museums needed to completely reinvent themselves in new ideological frameworks, in order to become more inclusive, Nigel's fear may have been justified. The ANC policy had a firm political and ideological base. It showed African nationalistic ideas in which Transformation should function, but gave few practical suggestions. The policy proposed collecting from previously subjugated groups and struggle material. Struggle material represents a new origin from which a common new heritage could be constructed. It also assumed a victorious position comparable to similar White aspects, e.g., uniforms or artefacts representing war. The Natal Museum had focused on rural and traditional aspects of African heritage, something contested during the late 1980s but celebrated during Transformation.

After 1994 rural and traditional African heritage played an important part in an emerging African nationalism which was a way of constructing an identity for heritage different from White identity. Collected material makes reference and heritage can therefore be said to shift political aspects of collection. The ANC policy criticised the material focus of museums that *MUSA* emphasised and proposed an intangible focus. Focus on oral material assumes an element of self-control of material culture: it was an intangible way of presenting history where 'colonial archives' could be disregarded and new narratives of heritage introduced. Oral history, according to Jenkins (1989: 121), suggests that heritage was narrated through community members and was not controlled by curators.

In the beginning of Transformation the Msunduzi Museum (VM) made very few changes to their collection programme and remained a historical museum focused on Afrikaner heritage. In 1992, however, the Natal Museum launched the *Amandla – the struggle for rights and freedom*,¹¹² a collection of apartheid paraphernalia¹¹³ that started around 1989 when the historian at the Natal Museum, Graham Dominy, visited the USA to investigate how museums fostered reconciliation between former enemies, classes, races and communities (Dominy & Khoza 1995: 8, 11). My informant Nigel (2006-04-11) held that it was director Stuckenberg who suggested a collection of apartheid public signs, as these were disappearing from the urban landscape as apartheid neared its end. Either way the collecting activities were

¹¹² Hereafter referred to as *Amandla*.

¹¹³ *Amandla* was originally called *Collecting the anti-apartheid struggle in Natal*.

initiated before national Transformation, because the museum was aware of the changing socio-political environment. During Transformation American perspectives became an important input to understanding race relations and renegotiating the social environment. It was believed that the USA had undergone a similar process and that, for South African museologists, America held the answers to the future.

Dominy (1991-05-05) described the effects of apartheid as central to understanding the country's recent past and held that it was the museum's duty to collect the material evidence. He stated to *The Natal Witness* (1991-06-06) that museums should preserve relics for the future when people were prepared to take a fresh look at the apartheid era. The *Amandla* project started focusing on signs, dompasses¹¹⁴ and material culture showing the spatial separation of groups (Dominy & Khoza 1995: 14). The collected objects in the beginning of the project represented White versions of apartheid and norms that the government had forced on the population. Since it was spatially collected in White areas it did not represent Indians, Coloureds or Africans. It was a representation of a White self; their relation to and memories of other groups. As the pass laws were repealed in 1986 the signs of segregation were removed and the physical appearance of an era began to vanish.

The collection of signs was both a way to preserve White heritage and to make an example of it. It was protecting a part of history and the self, and although socio-political change was a relief to the people, one cannot help wondering if the collection was not a way of preserving a heritage that explained who Whites were. The objects formed a visible reminder of divisions between groups. Since division was, as I have argued before, entrenched in how people classified heritage, the collection manifested how they saw heritage and what was needed to preserve it. It was a way of retaining a system – a way of life that was about to be fundamentally changed – while not knowing what the future would hold for those previously in power. The apartheid classification system represented security to Whites, while to the other it was a way of life and of relating to each other, upheld on the one hand and hated on the other, but much needed to represent the self and still drawn on in the social environment to state a position in the world. Similarities between the cultures were never a focus in colonial and apartheid museums, and are still not emphasised as a focus, though at present museums are trying to represent all 'cultural groups'.

¹¹⁴ Forced identification by the government.

Collecting these objects is a way to preserve a fragile memento, especially since Mkhize (1998-08-13) holds that records from the apartheid era were actively destroyed. To preserve this history could be seen as a way of reconciling with the past by remembering and preserving evidence of segregation as an important testament to history. Tolia-Kelly (2003: 315) holds that material culture cannot be situated only as a memento of a bound-up past, but also as textures of remembered places – in this case places and spaces of apartheid. Tolia-Kelly (2003: 315) continues that signification of identity, history and heritage through material culture depends on continuing adherence to the past to sustain the present. Individual objects relate to individual biographies, but are at the same time significant in stories of identity on the scale of citizenship.

The *Amandla* project encouraged university students to preserve their political T-shirts from the 1970s and 1980s as well as more current material commemorating DCO Matiwane, chief Mhlabunizima Mapohumulo, Victor Africander, Major Mcoyi and Jabu Ndlovu. Other symbolic material such as items of uniform and insignia was also sought (Dominy & Khoza 1995:16-17, Dominy 1991-05-05, Cembali 1992, *The Natal Witness* 1991-06-06). T-shirts gave testament of how neglected the female participation in the struggle was in the museum, since the curator did not mention or ask for such T-shirts. This speaks about both the patriarchal sphere of struggle and the patriarchal sphere of the museum, where history was presented from a male heteronormative perspective. Although Transformation has tried to expand on representation of heritage, aspects of age and gender have been overlooked. The museum tradition of collecting material culture must be seen as a background to this. The museum had a tradition of collecting certain objects and it perpetuated and applied this tradition over time. One of these objectives was to preserve objects from warlords and conflicts because they said something about the male norm that society rested on.

As the collection activities progressed, other material was incorporated into the collection such as political ephemera: posters, banners, leaflets, and pamphlets (Dominy & Khoza 1995: 16-17). The struggle paraphernalia was mostly collected from an ANC sphere, something important to bear in mind regarding the conflict in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1990s (Gustav 2006-11-07). Political affiliation is something that needs to be considered when discussing representation of objects in the collection. Struggle material was referred to overall as a homogeneous representation of groups or material, mainly because it represents defiance

against apartheid, White dominance and racial injustice. The fact was that the struggle was scattered along racial and political lines, but this was seldom acknowledged in museums since it served a nation-building heritage purpose. Struggle material was a Transformation construct and internecine war was not represented in museums because it worked counter to nation-building heritage.

I suggest that the struggle material symbolises a similar relationship to that of material confiscated by the Union defence forces or the police during the colonial and Union periods. Dominy and Khoza (1995: 16-17) and Cembi (1992-08-20) reveal that the *Amandla* collection of home-made weapons, cultural weapons, private property and political material of historical or symbolical nature was confiscated by the security police and donated to the museum. This close relationship has, however, been overlooked since struggle material made up such an important political role during Transformation. Struggle material reflected interaction between groups and deconstructed the idea of African heritage. Collecting this kind of material has come to resolve the problems of collecting African heritage because struggle material allows African heritage to alternate its value sphere from being a symbol of submission to a symbol of power.

The same renegotiations of meaning and value could be narrated, e.g., with spears. Traditional weapons¹¹⁵ assumed a significant role during the struggle. They were symbols of resistance and reaffirmed traditional values, rejecting the origins of colonisation. Spears in a greater African context represented a manifestation of struggle against colonisation, but were collected by Whites as a symbol of colonial victory. Stuckenberg (1993-11-09) confirmed and reflected on this in an interview:

In South Africa, where apartheid compounded such problems by forging a linkage between class and race, what is most authentically 'black' in our museum is our collection of ethnology ... but blacks, especially the younger ones, may disregard this evidence of their cultural history. For them the circumstances of their lives under apartheid may be their most exclusive form of self-identification.

Spears were originally collected as symbols of colonialism and the forging of a White state, but in the context 1980-1990 they became symbols of the struggle, internecine war and African rights to cultural expressions. The spears manifested a rural African heritage that upheld an idea of urban White heritage and reflected and upheld the idea and the reality of

¹¹⁵ As I will elaborate in Chapter 7.

spatial segregation. The urban landscape was designated White, but at the same time Whites identified themselves with rural aspects. Spears played a role in explaining White heritage and cultural location while actually narrating African heritage. Transformation also polarised urban and rural, the latter representing roots to Africans. During Transformation the meaning of material culture changed due to socio-political structures and ideals combined with the employment of different 'cultural groups'. By renegotiating traditional rural material to become symbols of struggle, the museum assumed a new role by actively constructing political significance attached to material culture. It renegotiated Africans as a passive other to become an active agent with a political identity.

The Natal Museum showed an awareness of the meaning of material culture before Transformation started. The museum was aware of what the collected material could symbolise and communicate. Because of this awareness it had the ability to renegotiate material culture and change its associated meaning. Since the museum was aware of the role material culture could play, they were also aware of the collection and of what was 'missing'. The museum (NMAR 1992/1993) held that *Amandla* broadened the contacts and addressed problems in the entire community. The project was described by Dominy (1996: 4) as very important for the development of ownership by disadvantaged communities. Makhosi Khoza said to *The Echo*: 'Much pain has been experienced and we need material that will reflect the everyday life of people through this long period' (Cembi 1992). An important part of Transformation was to relate the museum to the community, to open up the institution and make it accessible to them.

The later phase of *Amandla* was undertaken by Makhosi Khoza, Modisa Khosie and Aubrey Ngubane who established contacts with the townships (Dominy & Khoza 1995: 22, Maqetuka 1993). The later phase of the collection is a representation of self, since the collection activities were undertaken by Africans. The question is whether the material culture in the collection is relevant to the entire community because it was Africans that collected it. The economical class of the collector and collected is another important issue to consider and holds implications for representation. The collectors' training as curators also affects the work. I suggest that there is a formula in the museum on how to collect and that it governs the purpose of collecting and the objects collected. The museum workers when collecting are performing a collection ritual. The group affiliation of the collector does not change the tradition of collecting, though it might change the relation to the object collected, but not the

type of object assembled. But being from a different race, class or gender than the museum norm might grant collectors access to other spheres in society. In this case Africans had easier access to townships and information than Whites. The material culture might therefore be the same, but the information might differ. It is a self-representation, but that is not necessarily more objective. Compare, e.g., White material in the cultural history collection. Yet the act assumes an authority over the material previously claimed by Whites.

The museum was interested in a holistic approach to the political parties and trade unions that all played important roles in the history of the region (Cembi 1992). The *Amandla* project did not actively collect Indian and Coloured struggle material, perhaps due to the socio-political changes during the tricameral parliament. After the election in 1994, Dominy and Khosa (1995: 28-29) held that 'normal' political activities were collected. They continued to state that *Amandla* was not a shortcut to cosmetic change for museums that had lost their direction. Dominy said to *The Echo*: 'The museum accepts that this is not yet the complete story, and are anxious to obtain more material so that all parties and viewpoints can feel involved, and that their stories are included' (Maqetuka 1993).

Struggle material and Indian and Chinese material was reclassified and incorporated in the cultural history collection in the 1990s (Sahra 2005-10-11). The cultural history department collected from all the inhabitants of Natal and focused on interaction between different groups. The anthropology department collected traditional African-South African material culture. When I asked my informant why this reclassification had occurred, she said that it 'was just decided' that it should be history rather than anthropology (Sahra 2005-10-11). The museum during this time deconstructed its own classification system, and renegotiated material culture and presented new sets of standards. The classification entailed a division of the rural-traditional (ethnography) and the urban-modern (cultural history) in considering material culture. The system is ambiguous but shows a way to deal with Transformation.

6.6 Collections in the time of democracy

When the political dispensation changed in 1994, collection objectives also changed, but the collected material still remained the same. The RDP (ANC 1994: 70) stipulated that historical and cultural collections must fully reflect the cultural heritage of South Africa and that the heritage of suppressed people especially must be taken into consideration. The Natal Museum

had always collected African material, but this was considered by the ANC policy (Wilmot 1993) as distorting African heritage since it was collected by Whites. The intention with collecting material culture is that a collection intends to represent the group that produced the material culture. As I have argued, however, a collection need not be more representative if it embodies the self and there is an institutionalised way of collecting.

Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (2004: 310, 320), I suggest that objects do not represent African heritage, but the passing of time and relations between Africans and Whites. Material culture represents transitions and time, and it is through collected material culture that the relationship between the collector and the collected can be understood. In considering time the past can be brought out as a dimension of consciousness; this was done by collecting and repositioning material culture. Collections represent a relationship that is never fixed: that is subject to temporal change and depends on interpersonal relationship. Collection is therefore an archive of time-relations which in itself was a valuable document visualising interracial relations. Understanding collections as a relationship between two groups rather than as a representation of one group could help the collection to transcend the difficulties of Transformation. The collections become a testament to socio-political circumstances and relations which can help to address racial stereotypes.

Transformation had to deal with collection legacies from the colonial and apartheid era and with the representation of objects not made by the people originally using them. Heumann Gurain (2004: 270) and Ames (2004: 87-88) suggest that collections have become a burden for museums because little is known about the origin of objects and it is difficult to exhibit them authentically. To bridge this issue and for the communities to resume control over their heritage, the *ACTAG* (1995) and the *White Papers* (1996) laid emphasis on *amasiko*. It was described as traditions, rituals and customs and defined as of paramount importance for the reconstruction and development process (*ACTAG* 1995: 67). *Amasiko* was a critique of past collecting activities where objects in general were regarded as static, insufficiently documented and numb. The *ACTAG* (1995: 57) suggested that the conservation of cultural heritage was not merely a return to the customs of the past, but embodied the attitudes of people and the future of their traditional values faced with modernity.

Mpumlwana et al (2002: 258) suggest that by adopting *amasiko* museums can move away from an object-centred to a people-centred approach. Ben Ngubane said that museums should

collect oral testimonies and not only be preoccupied with storing and displaying 'dead' physical objects. This would ensure that museums were not seen as an alien place (Ngubane in Mpumlwana et al 2002: 258). During Transformation the meaning and not the objects were in the centre; this was not unique to South Africa but followed global museological trends. Despite the focus on *amasiko* the ACTAG (1995: 60) has a similar emphasis to MUSA 's on the role of museums in preserving and interpreting society through collections. ACTAG has vaguer definitions of what to collect and of the function collections should fill. ACTAG expresses difficulties orientating the heritage landscape. On the one hand it does not want to discard objects on which the museum was founded, but on the other it criticises the practice of collections and wants to make up for lost information.

My field research has shown that although museums focused on *amasiko* they collected material culture to make *amasiko* tangible in collections and displays. This was because the museums could not escape museum structures they had inherited and under which they functioned. *Amasiko* ultimately aimed at transferring control over representations of history and heritage from Whites to a multicultural community. Since objects were no longer considered to be at the centre of museums, they were, following Jordan (2003: 21), no longer representative of the self, but involved practices and beliefs that were formed through a process of self interpretation.

Amasiko aims to dismantle the previously dominant White self and make collection less prominent in museums. It also deconstructs the evolutionary empirical truths believed to be obtained from the material. Instead *amasiko* approaches heritage as relative, complex and fragmentary and acknowledges and discards the eurocentric heritage of museums. *Amasiko* attempts to reposition material culture and connect to the original narrative believed to be obtained through *amasiko*. It represents events rather than trying to capture the whole history of society visible, e.g., in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) documentation of the consecration of the Hindu Indian temple in Pietermaritzburg. Representation through *amasiko* can be regarded as participating in collecting rather than as documentation. Transformation and *amasiko* were therefore about power – power over the past and present representation of heritage.

Amasiko provided an opening and an exploration of new cultures, identities and expressions. It allowed museums to more freely explore heritage and borderlines. *Amasiko* expressed a loss of cultural stability based on the belief of distinctive and segregated heritages - something that

it aimed to deconstruct at the same time. *Amasiko* can be a tool for such deconstruction, but it is used overall to explore traditionalism and not multicultural heritage. This is most likely an effect of an unstable socio-political environment where people in search of new identities clung to traditionalism in order to state their position in the world. *Amasiko* therefore functions as a tool to renegotiate heritage by documenting the population's negotiation of themselves and their heritage.

Since the Msunduzi Museum (VM) realised that they could no longer be an exclusive Afrikaner museum, they started in 1994/1995 to enlarge their collection to make it more representative of the history of KwaZulu-Natal (VMAR 1994/1995). Despite this effort Mkhize and Mapalala (2002) describe it as representing the hegemonic interests of Afrikaners and neglecting Africans. During Transformation there has been an overemphasised African perspective that neglected Indians and Coloureds. Transformation favours this perspective due to the present political dispensation's ideologies; it aims at disarming previously dominant heritage perspectives. Küsel et al (1994: 6) argue that conservation is rooted in a socio-economic and political context and that it should be done in collaboration with the community which sought to find new entries to heritage. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) wanted to avoid its tainted political association and aimed at a neutral position in Transformation. My informant Francis (2006-10-19) suggested a music collection that was an attempt to be non-political and multicultural and a way to focus on something new instead of on the politically charged Afrikaner collection.¹¹⁶

When the Msunduzi Museum (VM) appointed Sibongiseni Mkhize as director, the collection programme changed greatly. The director wanted the collection programme and research to show the diversity of culture in the province and to engage in a general critical debate. He encouraged the research staff to tackle 'difficult and contentious subjects without fear' (letter from Mlondi 2006-09-14). The museum found that the collection needed to be diversified and to include material culture from previously marginalised groups in order to be in line with the national priorities. Thus it started to document *amasiko* (VMAR 2002/2003, Mkhize & Mapalala 2002). In this connection the director-emeritus Pols articulated to *The Natal Witness* what I interpret as his apprehension of Transformation, especially in regard to Voortrekker material culture. He said: 'I worry that the government doesn't understand what museums

¹¹⁶ The music collection started but was never fully implemented. It is discussed further in Chapter 7.

need', and: 'One should look after the old – we have irreplaceable collections' (Von Klemperer 2002-02-21). Pearce (1995: 175) has shown that collections are part of a physical self and therefore people identify with them. I suggest that Pols' statement may illustrate a feeling of losing control of the self-representation¹¹⁷ – the Voortrekker collection – when the museum was transforming. There is a clear connection between the museum's collection and socio-political structures, but my field research has shown that it is not an experience to be dictated by DAC. My informant Mlondi (2006-09-14) said that as the new director was appointed the collection activities and research changed to present Zulu and Afrikaner heritage with an emphasis on struggle history and political history.

Struggle material was a way to construct an origin of democracy and it was a celebration of present political ideals. The Natal Museum started collecting struggle material in the late 1990s because it was aware of the process of change and because the change was significant to it. Drawing on Jordan (2003: 21), Pearce (1995: 159, 166) and Knell (2004: 20), I suggest that to socialise material culture is a way for museums to share the aim of society and establish a common identity within a network of power and knowledge aimed at gaining a sense of selfhood. Pearce (1995: 236) and Kopytoff (1986: 64) follow Bourdieu (1977), Moore (1986), Foucault (1977) and Thomas (1996) in holding that objects were seen as bringing the past into the present and that, when the memory connected to this changed, the webs of meaning, power and embodied participation were recreated. Pearce (1992: 55) writes that all material culture acts as reminders and confirms an identity. Based on this I claim that struggle material has an African overtone and represents identity for the present political dispensation and is a heritage expression.

The ideology attached to struggle material was similar to the ideology that prompted the Voortrekker collection. The suffering, the desire for power, self-governance, overcoming obstacles and the quest for land were present together with male heroes and the father-of-the-nation concept. Both nationalistic movements drew on similar aspects; they used polarisation and exclusion to build a unified heritage. My informant told me that it was politically correct to collect struggle material (Anna 2006-04-13). The museum in Transformation needed to be politically correct to ensure funding and struggle material produces proof that they are no longer an instrument of past government propaganda.

¹¹⁷ As Biko (2004) articulates in relation to representation of African material culture.

The problem with struggle material is that very little of it remained to be collected unless it had been amassed at the time when it was still available. The Msunduzi Museum (VM), like many other museums, was acting according to government policies and tried to recapture an elusive heritage through struggle material. They tried to recapture an identity and a past so close and yet so difficult to collect. This signifies a period when Africans attempted to represent a self, but most of the time could not, since they were not in political control when the struggle occurred. Struggle material suggests a political position and a changing ideological content of the collection. It has been seen as a reconciliation factor, but as I showed earlier, reconciliation moves along lines of presenting conflicts rather than resolution. I interpret it as the new political dispensation coming to terms with and understanding the cultural heritage it wants to promote and the symbols it wants to exonerate. Political struggle is made tangible in collections and therefore becomes understandable and usable.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) partly altered its passive collection policy of heritage material to an active collection policy of multicultural and struggle material amassed for display. My informant said that before Transformation the museum collected everything, but after the restructuring this policy had changed (Asokin 2006-02-08). During Transformation the museum collected for display, which changed the consistency of its collection and materialised Transformation objectives as displaying messages and not collections. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) filled a role and communicated meaning through objects. This was a way to bridge the old way of collecting with the new and to expand content.

The new collection activities resembled the Victorian to a great extent, focusing on traditional aspects especially within African heritage. The irony was that the collecting activities during Victorian and apartheid times were harshly criticised, as they were under White control. During Transformation, however, the interpretation of traditional material changed. It was partly seen as integral to subjugation, but was also used and celebrated. Transformation might therefore seem inconsistent, since the same material was at once criticised and celebrated. Transformation is about agents performing collection activities and about space and time. The medium and the material were the same but time, socio-political structures and agents' collecting had changed. It was not the material per se that was significant, but the meaning constructed and given to the material and the person collecting it.

Another way to transform the collection was to fill gaps, since the collection, consisting mainly of donation, was in many cases not coherent. Filling gaps made it more representative and holistic and changed disarray into unity. By filling gaps information of heritage could be better systematised and studied. This entailed a deeper understanding and a rewriting and expansion of history. In 1996 the Natal Museum (NMAR 1998/1999) bought a collection of wooden material from the collector and amateur anthropologist Frank Jolles. The museum was interested in the material because they already had a collection of wooden material and this would mean an important expansion to that collection. The *Jolles Collection* contained headrests, meat platters and spoons from the Msinga area in KwaZulu-Natal.

In between 1994-1996 Jolles collected artefacts together with a local dealer (Jolles 2001: 97). My informant William (2006-03-06) told me that the aim was to collect wooden objects because they had become scarce and were collected out. The expansion of the collection was to continue a collection sequence of African material culture and, at the same time, focused on traditional aspects already known. It entailed using the already collected material and continuing a eurocentric selection. The classification and intention of the collection distinguished themselves from a traditional collection and were supposed to represent a memento in African heritage. This collection was meant to show the dynamics of heritage over time and was based on knowledge about the heritage and on the choice of the private collector.

The collection bordered on a private collection and a collection undertaken for research purposes. The collecting was undertaken outside the museum sphere, but in the same tradition and had the same bias as a collection undertaken for research purposes and also for economic gain, since Frank Jolles collected for economic gain and sold to auctions and collectors outside South Africa. Londt writes in *The Natal Witness*:

At a time when private collectors and dealers are exploiting rural Zulu people for their own personal gain, it is gratifying to know that there are still people like Professor Jolles who recognise the value of conserving our heritage by entrusting well-provenanced and documented cultural artefacts to the care of a public institution like the Natal Museum (Londt 1997).

My informant told me that Jolles was interested in solving the problem of the continuation of wood carvings in an area where few carvings remained and how these carvings had developed stylistically within specific families over time in a landscape bordering on Natal and

KwaZulu. He also told me that people who normally collected there would not document the history and in some cases would suppress information because they did not want other people to know where they collected (William 2006-03-06).

My informant emphasised unwritten African history and the need to document it through collecting and assembling everything available, because he did not want to collect with any assumptions. He argued that many things that he collected did not interest a White collection market and had therefore survived (William 2006-03-06). The collector showed an interest in the monetary aspects of material culture and would most likely not have sold the artefacts to the museum if they could have been sellable on a collection market. His interest complied with the museum's idea of African heritage as rooted in tribalness. Exotic artefacts were considered unique and were juxtaposed to western lifestyle. Traditional techniques and handmade objects were the focus, and not artefacts made with power tools. The traditional aspect of African culture continues to intrigue the museum, and the collector tried to save material and information before it vanished. Traditional artefacts fixed group identity and made it comprehensible because, as Radley (1991: 72) explains, artefacts are believed to embody continuities and this has to do with one's place in the world.

Important for Transformation was to make the community understand that museums were not only a place for Whites. Museums relied mostly on donations that by implication suggested belonging and could be regarded as community participation. The deputy minister of DAC Ntombazana Botha (2006-10-06) said that museums had no relevance unless people were informed and participated in their activities. I suggest that donations from Indians, Coloureds and Africans were important because they brought a sense of ownership to the institution and a representation of self. Donations from these groups were mainly connected to projects that the Natal Museum initiated, e.g., *Amandla* and *Threads in Time*.

My field research has shown that Michael Nzuza, who donated 100 antique bottles to the Natal Museum in 1998, was the only African person to have donated to the museum. My informant Anna (2006-04-16)¹¹⁸ said she did not know of any material donated by Africans. She explained that perhaps Africans did not know what the museum needed, or they could sell

¹¹⁸ Employee at the Msunduzi Museum.

the items for economic gain. Sibongiseni Mkhize¹¹⁹ said to *The Natal Witness* (1998-08-14): 'It is quite unusual for someone like Nzuza to amass such a collection'.

During the 1990s there was a collection frenzy for antique objects in KwaZulu-Natal. The bottles that Nzuza donated to the museum had monetary value for White collectors and buyers which he was aware of and he collected the bottles for the purpose of selling them. 'I know that some people are interested in old bottles and wish to make a contribution to the Nation' (*The Natal Witness* 1998-08-14). He made an active choice, however, to donate to the museum. Nzuza showed an interest in the museum, which in turn acknowledged his donation in the media. Appadurai (1986:25) holds that giving is connected to power and status. Changing race, class and gender in terms of donors alters the hierarchical relationship to the museum and is the reason why they acknowledged the donation in the media. What was important in this case was the group affiliation of the donor and what the act of accepting the material meant to the museum. The donation contributed to Africans understanding the museum differently and this visualised a changing attitude to the museum. Yet Nzuza showed a certain disbelief since, as my informant Sahra (2004-11-15) described it, he visits now and then to see if his collection is still there.

The irony was that the collection represented White colonial material culture and, as a donation, it could easily be compared to donations of African material culture. Nzuza collected from a rubbish heap in the Edendale area so the bottles were undocumented, out of context and were collected by a person who was not a representative of that heritage. The collection was no different from donations of African material culture, but the meaning attached to the donor made the collection different. This can be reconnected to the earlier statement made by Dolly Khumalo and my informant Thabang who argued that only one's own heritage should be represented in museums.¹²⁰ Nzuza's donation showed western material culture in an African context. This was similar to my earlier discussion of porcelain shards representing African rather than colonial heritage. The bottles were important for Nzuza and his heritage, otherwise he would not have donated them to the museum.

Nzuza's collection helps unpack the assumption that collections are locked in time and space. The collection was a testament of time and society's activities and of what was considered

¹¹⁹ In his role as a historical anthropologist at the Natal Museum.

¹²⁰ Referring mainly to African heritage.

important 'in' that time. Nzuza's act of donation overshadows the material donated. In Transformation the person's race, origin and economic class holds great significance for the museums, and the material was therefore singled out as important. The meaning given to the material culture and collection also constitutes the meaning of the museum. It was the experience of the objects that constituted the difference. Nzuza experienced the bottles as valuable and the museum experienced his act as valuable for Transformation.

A collection programme for Indian material culture had been planned for several years, but was hampered by financial restraints. The project *Threads in Time* was a solution to this. The project manager told *The Natal Witness* that most Indian material in the museum was collected by Whites who had lived in India. It was therefore a representation of Indians rather than South African Indians (Von Klemperer 1999-01-19). The project manager's articulation of the collection is different to Nigel's (2006-04-11) earlier statement and interests in collecting. She draws no parallel between the Indians and South African Indians and articulates a need to represent what was South African Indian in the museum. She has no interest in depicting Indians' origins, but is instead interested in collecting what is 'indigenously' Indian South African. This might also articulate the changing perspective of the White self. Whites start to transform their heritage identity to be less European and more White South African. This is important for understanding the heritage landscape during Transformation. Whites started to separate and articulate a difference from the 'home countries' and began to 'indigenise' heritages, which was possibly an effect of the new political dispensation that emphasised these aspects. Collections in connection with this can be understood with reference to Merleau-Ponty (2004: 497-498), who points out that our understanding of the world is based on the relationship between meaning and absence of meaning. During Transformation it became obvious that the absence of objects from Indians and Coloureds showed that the museum was not fully multicultural. This was overshadowed, however, by the presence of what was interpreted as inaccurately represented African material culture and a negative overemphasis on White material culture.

In 2000 Beryl Page donated to the Natal Museum 63 items of beadwork made by Ndebele, Xhosa and Zulu females that she bought in support of craftswomen and helped them to sell (*The Natal Witness* 2000-07-18). These objects were made for tourists and the incorporation of tourist artefacts in the collection was in line with post-structuralism and new museology that challenged the high-low, authentic-non-authentic concept of collecting. Cruikshank

(1992: 8) and Pearce (1995: 406, 1989: 130) suggest that objects can be perceived differently from person to person. Taborsky (1990: 52-53), however, holds that the amount of meaning given to an object is limited. I argue that it was the person's interpretation and approach to an object that might limit the meaning. From the donation it is possible to read a series of meanings: the donor's interracial attitude, something that I have perceived as important to Whites at present, and the donor's relationship to Europe during the 1980s.

At the time several countries boycotted South Africa, and according to Page robbed the craftswomen of their income. Jenkins (1989: 121-122) proposes that artefacts can never be consistent in isolation from geographical, economic and cultural factors. Page's beadwork has relevance culturally, economically, socially and politically, depending on how it was produced and consumed. The collection positions African females economically during apartheid and gives testimony of global processes that affected their everyday life. This deconstructs African femininity and positions African women in a political, economic and global history as active contributors to economic and social development – something not seen before in collections. This interpretation shows that collections were not static and subject to one associated meaning, but were subject to changing spaces and times. This is only visible when studying the collection's relations to time and space in detail.

In Transformation less critique has been directed at the archaeology collection than at the ethnographic collection. Perhaps because archaeology challenged apartheid history-writing¹²¹ and focused on pre-colonial history in keeping with the African Renaissance and the present political environment. It was mainly White archaeologists who undertook research, and this implied the same problematic as Whites collecting the African other, though this was not discussed at the time. Neither were the temporal implications of the present White archaeologist interpreting past African cultures, or the classification system that rested on the system developed in Denmark during the 1800s. Since DAC was eager to convey essentialist pre-colonial history in line with African Renaissance ideals, it did not seem to matter that the interpreters were White. The archaeological collection was not seen as being as deeply tainted as the ethnographic collection, although the two used similar means to classify and collect material culture. Aspects like these help acknowledge that Transformation was ideological and emphasise the arbitrary elements in the political agenda.

¹²¹ As will be further explored in Chapter 7.

6.7 Reclassifying collections

Classification systems play an important role in understanding the museum structure, the collection as a phenomenon, displays and how material culture and ‘culture groups’ were perceived by museums and how this formed heritage production. A classification is a spatial, temporal or spatio-temporal segmentation of the world. It is a system into which things can be put and where they perform bureaucratic work or knowledge production (Bowker & Leigh Star 2000: 10). Transformation reshaped the classification systems of the collections that led to an expansion of knowledge and an alteration of the meaning of the material culture. Pearce (1992: 85), Bowker and Leigh Star (2000: 11), and Cameron (2004: 65) explain that classification systems are human relationships, the infrastructure of cultural production, and are connected to the culture in which the museum operates. The structure of the collection will tell how museums perceived reality. Pearce (1989: 48) holds that the meaning of objects was upheld through systems that were self-contained and self-maintained. Objects are given meaning through their role in history in providing synchronic meanings.

The earliest collected ethnographic material in the Natal Museum was donated by Whites and incorporated into the numerical classification system as representing either the self or an exotic other. This was a way of ordering and controlling what entered the frame. The Natal Museum divided its collection into archaeology, cultural history and ethnography to articulate order separated from chaos. The division reflected segregation and a polarisation between self and other, past and present. It upheld a segregated relationship between ‘cultural groups’ and reflected the knowledge production in display. The classification system showed an interest in variations, visual differences and function and not in ethnography. The object was seen as communicating an essentially measurable objective truth for the scientist. I hold that the original classification in the original culture from which the object was collected became arbitrary. The object became a part of the museum culture as soon as it was collected. Museums reflected the original culture, but did it within the structures (space-time) of the institution, and material was therefore subject to the culture of the institution. The classification system revealed the museum’s idea of society, material culture and self-identification. Collections were about the museum as a legitimised national heritage and articulated it in classifications and policies. Arnold (2006: 243) holds that classification was the most powerful means by which knowledge was created and reinterpreted in museums.

Stuckenberg reacted to the ethnographic-cultural-historic classification in 1987:¹²² ‘It is a colonial anachronism that we continue to call studies of African culture ‘ethnology’, whereas studies of White culture we call ‘cultural history’ (The Natal Witness 1987-05-06a). The collection was a way of keeping order between the self and the other and what was once a classification system became a symbol of oppression. Taborsky (1990: 54) holds that meaning, in this case through classification, was created by agents and can be understood as a long-term, socially created discourse that operated within a distinct infrastructure creating knowledge. The Natal Museum appointed archaeologists, anthropologists and historians who started to question and deconstruct the narratives in the museum. The changing socio-political environment provided a way to question the collection and its reflection of segregation. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (2004: 348), one uses the self as a measure to understand the other. This approach is used to construct an ‘objectivity’ which material culture rests on.

According to my informant Sahra (2005-10-05), the Natal Museum has used the Chenhall’s classification system¹²³ since 1993. In 1997 Msunduzi Museum (VM) changed its language from Afrikaans to English which was regarded as Transformation and in 1998 they started using Chenhall’s classification system (Asokin 2006-09-26). The previously used numerical classification system was added to the new classification system. Robert Chenhall developed the Chenhall’s system in 1974, his goal being to provide collections of material culture with uniform terms from daily nomenclature (Blackaby & Greeno 1988: I1, Pearce 1992: 129). My informant Sahra (2005-10-05) regarded this classification system as particularly helpful for industrially fabricated objects, but not for craft objects. Chenhall’s terms identify and classify objects that appear alike alphabetically, which creates a hierarchy of relationship between the terms which it standardised (Blackaby & Greeno 1988: I1). Objects were incorporated into an American anglophile classification system accustomed to a western urban society earlier providing similar eurocentric problems. It was not the indigenous classification system emphasised by Transformation, but a eurocentric knowledge system which assumed power over the material. Re-classification was a product of eurocentric-based knowledge production, but since it was implemented during Transformation it appeared as a democratisation of collections. Time was a crucial aspect for understanding collection activities. Reshaping of classifications made collections represent time in line with the changes in the socio-political

¹²² In his opening speech at the 1987 SAMA Conference.

¹²³ An American classification system known officially as ‘The revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloguing. A Revised Version of Robert G Chenhall’s system for classifying man-made objects’, referred to in the museum as Chenhall’s.

environment. Collections are a ‘time-reckoning’ of socio-political changes, and classification is a way of organising knowledge and visualising power relations.

Chenhall’s classification system was based on a system identifying objects with a generic term based on their original intended function in order to create the least ambiguity for cataloguing (Blackaby & Greeno 1988: II1, I2). Multicultural material culture, objects made for one purpose but used for another, poses problems when classifying and could result in a loss of information. Chenhall’s system has managed to get around this by including groups according to usage and in that way objects may appear in more than one classification (Blackaby & Greeno 1988: II1). Nevertheless once classified the change in value or alternative usage was limited. Placing objects in a hierarchal sequence where information of society depends on form and function limits association and memory.

New museology and Transformation have critiqued classification systems since they assumed a ranking order, e.g., between ‘cultural groups’. Transformation entailed an ambiguous position using frameworks that went against Transformation ideals to organise and expand the knowledge production of objects. Knowledge is retrieved from classification systems and the ‘new’ Transformation knowledge communicates eurocentric values as previously, but in a new time and space.

During Transformation the Natal Museum implemented the use of the ICOM handbook of standards *AFRICOM. Documenting African Collections*¹²⁴ (1996) for their ethnographical collection. This system was especially developed to deal with the circumstances of African material culture. Following Merleau-Ponty (2004: 350), I suggest that the context, relation and appearance of an object give it its possible interpretation. Classification systems provide a context and a relation in which material culture appears. AFRICOM allows the material to appear in an African context, and at the same time voids the power associated with eurocentric classification systems.

The classification entails extracting information from material culture. If the classification system cannot provide this, the object can only be appreciated for its visual appeal.¹²⁵ AFRICOM (1996) acknowledged that African material culture had been misclassified and

¹²⁴ Hereafter referred to as AFRICOM.

¹²⁵ Something that can be noted in the African Art display in the Natal Museum.

that knowledge had been lost. It tried to develop a system that was suitable for the conditions of African material. AFRICOM was trying to bridge these aspects by including different kinds of information, listing it and defining the content. The information was grouped in the customary way and provided a detailed physical identification of objects, placing them in their socio-cultural, geographical and chronological context.

AFRICOM assumed that material culture was not collected by the groups that originally made and used it; and aimed to place it in its cultural and historical context. Chenhall's system indifferently assumes that the context is known and documented and that the collector and the maker belong to the same culture. AFRICOM presumed that information was unknown, and tackled the discourse and epistemology of anthropological collections affected by colonial conditions. It aimed to provide as much information as possible and put the objects into context. My informant Sahra (2005-10-05) used AFRICOM for the ethnographic collection, but regarded it as less detailed than Chenhall's. She added that she would not use AFRICOM for the cultural history collection because Chenhall's gave more entries.

This suggests that more knowledge had been obtained from western-made objects to construct a classification system like Chenhall's. Classification also depended on the questions asked of the material culture; these are based on a general understanding and knowledge of material culture. Pearce (1992: 131) holds that the process of classification generated meaning and rested on the assumption that classifications correspond in a direct way with the real world. Chenhall's proposes a more consistent approach to western artefacts, whereas AFRICOM reveals an acknowledged lack of facts and differences between groups, providing a deconstruction of a pan-African culture.

Pearce (1990: 128) holds that if objects are to be of social use they must be structured according to socially understood rules such as classification systems. Classification systems reveal different questions asked 'in' different times and different ways of organising time and space. When the collection was 'out' of the time of the classification system, it no longer answered the questions asked of the material. The objects were regarded as numb. A new classification system could not fill knowledge gaps in past collections, but it could provide for the material to be better understood according to new questions and answers. To be fully transformed the heritage sector should ideally develop an indigenous classification system

based on all heritage expressions in South Africa. That would be the most earnest and democratic way of documentation, but also the most complicated system to develop.

6.8 Collections in Transformation

Transformation entails a change to inclusive multicultural society, but this is not a simple and straightforward change. It brings about an alteration in agents and perspectives, but not necessarily in the material and legal framework. The *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* reads like previous acts concerning collections. The national museums could continue to sell, exchange, purchase, possess and hire collections if the minister did not object. Some years later there was a slight change with the *Cultural Laws Second Amendment Act 69 of 2001*: the museums could not sell collections or material unless the minister made exceptions.

The fundamental objective of Transformation was articulated by deputy-minister of DAC Ntombazana Botha who said that museums should no longer be object-centred but people-centred (Botha 2006-10-26). Yet the *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* did not protect intangible heritage (*amasiko*). There was a discrepancy between the act and ACTAG (1995) and the *White Papers* (1996) that defined *amasiko* as paramount for South African heritage. The *Cultural Institution Act 119 of 1998* and *Cultural Laws Second Amendment Act 69 of 2001* continued to build on apartheid structures and made no provision to protect *amasiko* legally. In regard to collections, these acts did not bring forth any Transformation aspects and implemented only minor changes. This suggests that the new political dispensation was not concerned with changing museum collection activities on practical levels, that they did not know how to change them, or that they were satisfied with the collections as long as they complied with political ideologies.

Transformation also brought about new collection policies. Knell (2004: 13) and Fürst (1989: 98) hold that a collection policy is a control document that decides what kind of material enters a collection and has great influence on research activities. It further determines the difference between active and passive collection. Glenning (2003: 12) has extended this model to something he calls systematic collection directed by a collection policy. This was the ideal collecting activity in line with museological discourse. Non-systematic collecting is characterised by personal preference and a desire to obtain large quantities of material. This kind of collection is mainly donated and Glenning refers to it as a museological vacuum.

The Natal and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) were characterised by non-systematic collecting, but parts of the collections represent a systematic collection. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) borders on a systematic collection, since it contains Voortrekker items from 1912-2003. This is in keeping with informal museum policy although the material was donated. Mkhize and Mapalala (2002) suggest that during Transformation the Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection changed with the demands to diversify it. The collection policy stated that the museum was no longer concerned with material from White Afrikaner communities, but from other communities (draft collection policy 2003, Voortrekker Museum). The Msunduzi Museum (VM) now collected from previously disadvantaged communities and for display purposes. The objectives of collecting for display purposes have resulted in a fruitful relationship with, e.g., the local Indian Hindu community, and the museum's interest in the group has resulted in donations to the museum. The museum researchers recorded the construction and consecration of a new temple and the temple builders were kind enough to mould a little temple for the museum. The museum's changed policy has therefore resulted in an increased interest from communities that were not previously represented in the museum, which was also what Transformation intended.

New collections were intended to follow national ideals, but there was no clear coherent objective apart from not collecting White Afrikaner representation and collecting for display purposes. The objects collected rather revealed a disconnected representation of reality but could with time grow to a coherent collection. Nevertheless, Dunn (2004: 62-71) points out that a well defined collection policy was not a guarantee that objects would fit into the collection forever, and that the museum's research and collection direction could change and alter the history of the objects.

Since the 1990s the Natal Museum has had a combined collection policy for their cultural and natural material. It states: 'Only material that is appropriate to the achievement of the goals and mission of the Natal Museum should be accessioned into the collections' (Natal Museum Collections Policy: undated). The Natal Museum acknowledged with this policy that collections were not static, but related to changing museum activities in research and collection objectives. The mission statement of the museum was in line with socio-political structures that were proposed during early Transformation. According to the policy (Natal Museum collections policy: undated), the museum should ensure the goals of the mission

statement so that the collection was in harmony with research. Knell (2004: 13) argued that most policies lacked intellectual rationale for collecting, were isolated from other policies, and were interested in the material acquisition of object fetishism. This does not apply to the Natal Museum, for its somewhat haphazard collections came through its collection policy to function in line with the socio-political ideals of the government. This suggests a reciprocal relationship between collections and socio-political structures. Museums in South Africa were forced during Transformation to reconsider and reevaluate their activities and become up-to-date with a global museological discourse. The collections consisting of old donated material had to be reconsidered and the museums became aware of the problems and strengths of these collections.

The museums aimed to build a national multicultural collection to fill gaps and demonstrate the significant developments of South African history. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection policy was firmly located in a socio-political museological Transformation discourse. The Natal Museum collection policy renegotiated socio-political structures, making use of them within the framework of the museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) policy was a result of the demand to restructure the institution while the Natal Museum policy was a result of an institution that was largely changed before Transformation. Both policies revealed how the museums negotiated Transformation. Natal Museum was on an objective journey to uncover the empirical facts of the world and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was on a journey to make the representation of the museum more diverse. The policies also revealed something about the hierarchical social organisation in the museums, about how material culture was handled, and about its effects on classification and representation at large.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was affected by the RDP, which suggested a people-driven approach, since choices of what to accept into the collection were made by an acquisition committee. They also followed other governmental policies, e.g., the transformation budget guidelines suggesting that collections would lead to a more comprehensive representation of the national estate, incorporating aspects of tangible and intangible heritage (The transformation budget guidelines and framework, undated). In the Natal Museum the head of department was responsible and made the decisions. Collections should primarily reflect the research in the institution. The policy, together with the classification systems, revealed the museum's self-perception and its relation to the government. It also revealed the museum's attitude towards past activities and the implementation of Transformation. It revealed the

museological discourse over time and acknowledged a reclassification of objects and was dependent on agents, time and space. Policies and classification systems fused academic and museological discourses and the result became visible in research and displays.

6.9 What was Transformation in collections?

In this chapter I have shown Transformation in the Natal Museum and Msunduzi Museum's collections and how socio-political structures affected collected material and positioned it in a long temporal sequence in order to analyse how it was considered in Transformation. Time has been a keyword throughout this chapter, because collections manifest time and are the museums' way to institutionalise and materialise time and space. Collections capture time and space, position them in sequences and make them comprehensible. While doing this the museums 'time-reckon' and visualise ideals located within socio-political structures. Objects concretise time, transfer it into repetitive patterns, and represent a passing of time between groups, visualising a non-fixed relationship of interracialism. Material culture in collections represents the time 'in' which it was collected. It shows how the museums measure and understand space, time and change. It materialises the epistemology of museological intention.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) collection represented what the museum was – a memorial place for Afrikaners – and the collection produced a sense of belonging and was dedicated, until Transformation, to exclusively collected Voortrekker material. The Natal Museum collected archaeological, ethnographic and cultural history material that it classified in numerical order as the objects arrived in the museum – just as the Msunduzi Museum (VM) had done. Later the Chenhall's classification system was employed in Natal Museum's cultural history collection (1993) and in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) (1998). AFRICOM was used in the Natal Museum's ethnographic collection.

In the 1930s the Natal Museum separated the ethnographic and the cultural history collection; in the 1970s the archaeological collection was separated from the ethnographic collection, in the 1980s Indian material culture was reclassified from the ethnographic collection to the cultural history collection; and in the 1990s struggle material was incorporated into the cultural history collection. These reclassifications of material coincide with the socio-political environment at large, e.g., with legal alteration, strengthening of segregation laws and the fall

of apartheid, and with the professionalisation of the museum and general academic discourse. Classification systems provide an infrastructure for meaning-making, a context and possible interpretation. They depend on questions asked 'in' the time of classification, reposition objects and information and reveal details about society. Reclassifications were seen as part of Transformation, since they renegotiated material culture through the classification systems used which were eurocentric. Only a classification based on all heritage expression would suggest complete Transformation.

The museums relied mainly on donations from Whites. This embodied relations, interest and knowledge of the past and the other, and created relations and belonging between the museums and Whites. Donations emanated from private donors and institutions such as the Union defence forces, governmental institutions, monasteries and police authorities. African material donated in this way could entail loss of cultural rights and power. Struggle material was acquired in the same way, but was overlooked due to its associated meaning and connection to Transformation. Donated objects resulted in minor documentation and loss of information which, in regard to African material culture, has been criticised during Transformation as a misinterpretation of heritage. Yet the same material is used to empower African heritage and to bolster African Renaissance to argue against White domination; this visualises the ambiguous position of Transformation. During Transformation community projects, *amasiko* and a greater awareness of the museums has resulted in donations from Indians and Africans. This is considered important for Transformation.

Transformation has regarded Whites during colonial, Victorian and apartheid times as a static centre, but my research has shown that anglophile and Afrikaner museums differ and that museums changed with time and are not static. The *Du Toit Report* (1949), Rood-Coetzer (1966) and the *Niemand Report* (1975) were not pleased with the Msunduzi Museum's collection. During Transformation the museum would come to fulfil government requirements for collections especially after 2002. The Natal Museum was in line with government standards and also changed its collection objectives more. The museum was mostly interested in African material culture, but in the 1960s and 1970s the focus shifted to White material culture in keeping with the increasingly segregated socio-political environment. It was a nationalistic anglophile expression manifesting traditional values and preserving White heritage. This collection contributed to the museum becoming an 'own affairs' museum during the 1980s. Nationalistic expressions and apartheid history-writing were challenged in

the 1970s with the appointment of archaeologists who renegotiated material culture, resulting in a drop in donations. Archaeology during Transformation came to serve nationalistic purposes and was therefore not challenged in the same way as the ethnographic collection although it posed the same bias as Whites collecting the African other. In the 1980s, affected by the tricameral parliament, Indian heritage was of interest. It was not until the *Threads in Time* project, however, that South African Indian material culture was collected and not ancient exotic artefacts from India. The *Amandla* project initiated a collection of struggle material which became a norm during Transformation. This came to develop into a nationalistic expression during Transformation and was considered nation-building.

The two museums collected according to a set of standards that they developed at inception. These were considered representations of society and were institutionalised. Representations are a symbolic dimension linked to a wider set of ideas related to the self and other. They include ideas about gender roles, class and age and are not free-floating but are situated in time and space. Whites used their experience of the self as a means of classification and applied this to the other to comprehend heritage expressions. They embodied the other culture within their own classification system and acted it out within a eurocentric norm. In order to understand why objects were collected, they have to be positioned in relationship to the socio-political structures.

MUSA (1994) located museums as collection-based, as criticised by Odendaal (1994b) and Odendaal et al (1994), but the ANC policy (Wilmot 1993) had few practical solutions and suggestions for collections and the issues along ideological lines. The RDP (ANC 1994) suggested that collections must fully represent the entire South African heritage. *ACTAG* (1995) and the *White Papers* (1996) defined museums as collection-based but also suggested *amasiko*, which had not yet been legally protected. *Amasiko* was proposed as a way to deal with the material representation of heritage in collections. Instead of collecting material culture, museums should document events and intangible aspects. The method attempted to deconstruct eurocentrism and proposed a multicultural perspective. Museums, however, collect material culture as symbols of *amasiko*. The method has resulted in donations from the groups that were documented. During the 1990s the Msunduzi Museum (VM) tried to establish a music collection to avoid political implications, and the Natal Museum started to fill gaps in their ethnographic collection through research programmes and connections with African artists and dealers. Yet both museums explored heritage along traditional lines and

overlooked multicultural South African heritage expression. Transformation has mainly had an African focus and has to a large extent neglected Indian and Coloured heritage.

Transformation and apartheid reveal similar interest in heritage expressions; both periods attempted to show nation-building, origin, self-governance and traditionalism. The nationalistic expression of Transformation has not been criticised, but is celebrated in museological literature which has not acknowledged that Transformation builds on a similar basis to that of apartheid.

CHAPTER 7. SOCIAL SPATIALISATION MANIFESTED IN DISPLAY

Space is referred to as follows: the museum as a place consists of several spaces experienced in displays. Durkheim (1915), Hallowell (1955), Lévi-Strauss (1963), Hall (1966), Bourdieu (1977), Hugh-Jones (1979), Munn (1986), Moore (1986) and Gell (1992) have shown that space is a social construct depending on the societies that mediated it. According to Shields (1991: 30), space denotes a limited area characterised by specific social activities. I argue that these social activities are related to the socio-political climate and that, to understand Transformation of museums, one has to understand the organisation of space. Pred (1990: 123-124) argues that space is a medium through which social relations are produced, maintained and reproduced across time. The researchers Lefebvre (1991), Urry (1995), Cresswell (2004) and Massy (2005) have shown that space is never closed, neutral or passive. It is a dialectic structure that is produced and reproduced. I will here show how socio-political structures¹²⁶ become spatialised in displays.

Reiss (1982: 10-11), Durrans (1988: 157-162) and Radley (1991: 66) explain that material culture in displays can be signs caught in a network of contextual relations, within a definable, exceedingly complex environment from which they are inseparable. They can be changed to cultural means of communication or made distant and mute. I suggest that displays are time and power as compressed and spatialised in the museum and can be regarded as reactions and contra-reactions to the socio-political structures. Displays are about converting power and real space into tangible symbols in accordance with a social understanding of life. The display compresses power and time in museum spaces, and the displays show through symbols, compressions of times and spaces. At the same time as the displays compress time and power, they reshape symbols and lock them 'in' time, creating new spaces of power. The result is a constant dialectic between time, space and power dependent on human agency acting out socio-political structures. Time, space and power become understandable in relation to human agency. Displays are therefore organised according to social relations that directly correspond to, or are backlashes against, socio-political structures in an ongoing scheme of negotiations and re-negotiations. Displays become socio-political spaces visualised and materialised, especially noticeable in times of transformation. Transformation has created a distinction

¹²⁶ Presented in Chapter 4.

between past and present power, and this distinction makes up the core of the Transformation discourse.

7.1 Early times

Mkhize and Mapalala (2002) write that the displays¹²⁷ in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) were not inclusive, and that Africans were stereotyped to realise a role as obstacles in the progress of the White population. The latter might be accurate in their argumentation, but in reality the archival, photographic and display materials of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) are very scarce, which makes it difficult to trace and understand the curation of displays. Mkhize's and Mapalala's assumption is based on the central position the Voortrekkers played in apartheid political propaganda. I believe that the writers' intention is to position the displays as racially prejudiced. I find it difficult to adhere to the idea that a display should be judged as racist only because it was created by a dominant group, e.g., Afrikaners who displayed objects related to their heritage as discussed earlier in Chapter 6. Displayed objects were representations of the relationship between Afrikaners and Africans. It is therefore important to investigate the complex ethnographic reality behind the displays to be able to evaluate the role of the museum in the past but also in the present.

The above-mentioned writers refer to ways in which African history was presented in the museum. Mandela (1997: 3) stated in a public speech that heritage presented in museums represented a glorification of colonial history and at the same time stereotyped African history. His argument embodies Transformation rhetoric and the fact that museums are associated with the concept of the other and self. Africans in terms of White propaganda represented the other, something that was believed to be reflected in the museum. In the creations of stereotypes, binary opposition plays a powerful role and Hylland Eriksen (2004: 11, 54, 1993: 19, 176) writes that to create a self there must be an other, and that if the other was constructed as threatening, then the self was strengthened. Group identity is always classified or created by members and non-members of the group.

Stereotypes are memory-based and create social identities which are institutionalised in museums. With time memory will be taken for granted and treated as truth. The making of

¹²⁷ This research presents a selection of displays that is either permanent, semi-permanent or deals with Transformation in the Natal and Msunduzi Museums.

identities through boundary-making, binary opposition and stereotyping must be contextualised within the colonial and apartheid period where Africans functioned as part of a political purpose. Binary oppositions between Africans and Whites continued to be used after 1994, but in reverse form. Whites and the colonial and apartheid era were polarised in the struggle and democracy, e.g., in the display *Birth of Democracy*.¹²⁸ This was done purposely to strengthen the image and memory of democracy and to institutionalise a new self in museums. Past and present displays show that the concept of the other stresses a political position and is not exclusive to the colonial and apartheid era.

The first display in the Natal Museum (1904) was a natural history display with specimens from the Natal Society that Ernest Warren¹²⁹ transformed into a more scientific display, but the public did not approve and regarded Warren as narrow-minded (Stuckenberg 1988: 160). The collection was reinterpreted in the new place, the museum, using the architecture to reclassify the objects with the help of scientific spatial order. The natural history display played the largest part in the museum at its inception, but it was Warren's objective to turn the museum into a general museum planned to incorporate arts, antiquities and ethnology (NMAR 1904).

To Warren the ethnographic collection played an important role seen in repeated statements made by him in the Annual Reports¹³⁰ (NMAR 1904, 1905, 1907, 1908). The ethnological collection displayed both African objects and White 'settler' objects.¹³¹ The African objects were classified under the headings 'African tribes', 'races', 'stone implements', 'dwellings', 'furniture', 'cloths', 'personal adornments', 'weapons', 'agriculture', 'domestic appliances', 'music', 'arts' and 'medicine' and 'objects from various countries'¹³² (NMAR 1904). Classification systems embody moral choices (Bowker & Leigh Star 2000: 4) and the early displays reflected different classifications. Since White material culture already had an identified meaning, the objects were used to remember the past. African objects required identification and were classified to understand the past. I suggest that the presentation of African and White material culture was made different from each other because, as Bowker

¹²⁸ The Msunduzi Museum.

¹²⁹ The first director and an English taxidermist employed by the Natal Museum.

¹³⁰ As well as researching material culture and folk-lore and providing the objects with their original names.

¹³¹ The Natal Museum referred 'settler' objects to White material culture. These consisted of coins, guns and pistols, old treasury chests, maps and photographs.

¹³² Ernest Warren specifies, saying that the last heading was very vague.

and Leigh Star (2000: 2) argue, classification embodies knowledge where the object embodies practices that vary in keeping with social roles.

The Natal Museum display set out to explain other groups; the choice of themes highlighted and reflected not only other groups but ideas of White heritage. For instance, headings such as 'Zulu warrior' and 'native doctor' reflected the importance of military ideals and the role that medicine played for both Whites and Africans. The display showed values that both societies rested on. African material culture was classified under headings characteristic for Whites, because, as Bal (1996a: 75) argues, an object cannot be understood unless it resembles something already known. Whites classified and highlighted aspects of other cultures as they would classify their own culture to make it comprehensible to Whites. Bowker and Leigh Star (2000: 34), however, suggest that one person's 'infrastructure' may be another's barrier. During Transformation the early displays were criticised because the presentation of African heritage was perceived as not being inclusive.

The Natal Museum made no attempt at this time to separate cultural history spatially from ethnography. White and African material culture was represented in the same room, though a division would be made later in the museum. Bowker and Leigh Star (2000: 61) hold that it is crucial to understand that classifications are the foundation of social institutions, which reflect and describe the way things are in the social world. As society became increasingly segregated, classifications produced spatial differences and came to be treated as an institutionalised infrastructure and then posed a problem. The early displays must not be equated with displays during apartheid. The latter were spatially fundamentally different, separating White and African material culture, and depended on different socio-political structures. The purpose of displaying African material culture was to give Whites a sense of cultural orientation, and not necessarily to subjugate actively. But the Natal Museum could in part have functioned as a site for the ideological legitimisations of colonial conquest and success.

Until the 1970s displays were curated by natural scientists who classified and displayed material overemphasising evolutionary typology. Shelton (1990: 78-103, 2001: 142-145), suggests that they were used to legitimise knowledge and ideas and Bennet (1996: 100-101) that the museum socialised time according to social norms visualised through natural science standards. This, according to Preziosi and Fargo (2003: 14), became an important device for

elucidation and was a powerful rhetorical tool that masked ideological aspects. At the time this was regarded as the correct way of applying science but today this has negative connotations. Fabian (1983: 15-16, 31) holds that classifications produced a temporal distancing between past and present and between self and other. I suggest that the classification did not necessarily correspond with 'reality', but conveyed how, as Ehn and Löfgren (2001: 48-51) explain, Victorians were obsessed with borderlines and order. They experienced 'civilisation' as in constant struggle against chaos. By evolutionary temporal ordering African material culture was placed into a fixed past-time frame that enabled Whites to exercise comparison, control and civilisation in relation to other cultures.

The Natal Museum was different from the Msundusi Museum (VM), since it always formed an interest in African material culture and was less interested in White material culture. Eventually the Natal Museum lacked space and White material culture was withdrawn from displays in 1909 (NMAR 1909). Between 1920-1930 Warren continuously complained about the lack of space, and this caused the relocation of African material culture to the second-floor balcony. This led to the restructuring of the displays in 1948 and resulted in the upper-floor balconies becoming a designated space for cultural displays (NMAR 1924, 1934, 1935, 1938, 1939, 1948). Display and architecture became a taxonomic socio-political unity representing, entrenching and spatialising eurocentric classification and the idea of empirical knowledge. Transformation aimed to deconstruct and break with this, suggesting that IKS would bridge the division. During Transformation past-times classification was treated as a fixed infrastructure taking no consideration of the time it took to institutionalise, and was under constant negotiation.

7.2 Apartheid

The *Du Toit Report* placed an emphasis on building historical displays showing Whites having an origin in classical Mediterranean cultures coupled with Christianity, science, modern navigation, printing and warfare (Du Toit 1949: 192-194, 207). Classical Mediterranean cultures were a symbol of political virtue, wisdom and taste within the European context (Anderson 1999: 53). Drawing on these values, Whites polarised themselves against Africans and embodied White domination. In African political discourse similar expressions occur, compare e.g. Phosa's (1998) and Jordan's (2007) speeches, where cultural roots, origin and virtue are drawn from Africa and especially Egypt.

The report stressed origin of White South Africans in Europe and the relationship between the White population's level of civilisation compared to the rest of Africa and wrote that there was no museum that reflected this in South Africa (Du Toit 1949: 192-194, 207). Europe was emphasised as a point of reference for Whites in an attempt to unify them and highlight their difference from the rest of the population. Yet Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1995: 151-155) hold that 'settlers' were never able to construct a simple concept of national culture. Instead they were faced with a multicultural reality - place, displacement, settlement and migration became crucial elements in the construction of a unified identity.

It was further argued that historical displays in museums must refer to the White ancestors' 'role of pioneers in an underdeveloped country', to their political growth and to their relation to 'non-Europeans' (Du Toit 1949: 192-194). The Natal and Msunduzi Museum (VM) embodied this only partly in their displays. The *Du Toit Report* made the displays a political space by stating: 'They make for social stability and social cohesion in an age when we are sorely in need of both' (Du Toit 1949: 196). From here on museums officially became part of the state's political propaganda machinery. Yet there were discrepancies; the Natal and Msunduzi Museum (VM) never displayed a united White heritage, but reflected anglophile and Afrikaner perspectives, two different and sometimes opposing White heritages.

Museological writing associated with Transformation has criticised the past-times of the museums as having static Victorian displays. This was a way of saying that they were not inclusive enough. Museums were not static, however, but were part of a dynamic cultural process that materialised different socio-political ideals. Static, Victorian evolutionary displays were challenged as early as the *Du Toit Report* (1949: 145). This has not been acknowledged in current museological writing, in all likelihood because it was proposed during apartheid. Apartheid is often connected with oppression, moral and cultural regression and equivalent Victorian ideals. But the apartheid regime did not sustain Victorian ideals in displays – on the contrary it challenged them.

The *Du Toit Report* (1949) initiated various projects in the Natal Museum. In 1953 they started to build dioramas and modernised display-cases (NMAR 1953). Discussion as to whether they could become a historical museum led to a room being cleared for that purpose (NMAR 1957). Sourcing the Annual Reports 1958, 1959, 1969 it becomes clear that displays

started to become racially zoned in combination with the construction of the new wing. The display became spatially organised in exclusive zones in accordance with segregation policies forming spaces for segregated heritage.

Sourcing the Annual Reports, I found that Natal Museum tried to explain heritage in objective ways by using explanatory components and contextualising artefacts. They sought to be perceived as an institution conveying objective truths, although this did not mean that they were objective. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) never claimed to present objective truths, but the world-view of Afrikaners, and it balanced sentiments of the self and the past. During Transformation the Msunduzi Museum (VM) was subject to more scrutiny than the Natal Museum due to its ethnocentrically presented displays. The Natal Museum was never questioned in the same way although they also presented heritage just as ethnocentrically.

Msunduzi Museum (VM) started in 1959 to modernise itself (NVM 1959-06-06), but was criticised and described in 1962 as ‘a mass of exhibits which are not germane to its purpose and function’ that should be resituated where they would be better suited (*The Natal Witness* 1962-08-04). Critique such as this is invaluable in the deconstruction of the museum’s displays during apartheid. It shows that the place was not a strong symbol of Afrikanerdom as suggested in the writing referenced above. Further, the *Du Toit Report* (1949) and *De Villiers Report* (1968) produce an image of the Msunduzi Museum’s (VM) existence as uncertain, showing that the displays did not play a central role in government propaganda. I conclude that it was the place and its inherited meaning in the Church of Vow that were held as significant. The displays were secondary and merely supported the role of the place. This is shown clearly in a suggestion from Roodt-Coetzee (1966: 2, 10-13) which criticised the display and suggested that more benches should be placed in the display hall so that services could be held in the museum.

There was ambivalence whether to perpetuate the meaning of the museum as the Church of Vow or as a display hall, which has continued until the present, although my informants experience it differently. Nevertheless half of the display hall makes up a church, with benches and a pulpit, and display cases are organised as church benches. This analysis is also supported in the present display: *The Education of the Voortrekker Child* (1998), which commences with a history of the Church of Vow before examining the actual theme of the display. My informants might not be aware, or they do not want to acknowledge, that the role

of the place is still perpetuated. The Natal Museum encountered similar criticism although the *History Hall* was planned. The *De Villiers Report* (1968) argued that the displays were poorly arranged and outdated due to lack of staff. The critique was quite similar to the one brought forward during Transformation. Both have in common the emphasis on creating something new, something different from before, which resulted in a juxtaposition of the past.

The *History Hall* in the Natal Museum opened to the public on 15th May 1970 and was constructed without the professional assistance of a historian.¹³³ The *History Hall* presented White anglophile heritage in a natural science way. It was a representation of heritage and memory was reviled through sentiments not much different from representations in the Msunduzi Museum (VM). The museum was trying materially to re-establish a relationship with Europe, especially an anglophile identity evoking the colonial era, at a time when the settlers in (KwaZulu) Natal were English and not South African and when (KwaZulu) Natal was a British colony.

The *History Hall* was constructed from material from demolished houses in the city and featured a settler's cottage and separate period rooms, a blacksmith, a carpenter and cobbler and was described as producing a mythical atmosphere and authenticity. The idea was inspired by an English museum and was the first reconstructed street scene in a South African museum (NMAR 1961, 1968, 1969/1970, 1970/1971, Bowland 1970, *The Natal Witness* 1973-10-12). The street scene was named Theophilus Shepstone's place. Shepstone can be referred to as the 'Father of homelands' (Snail 1993: 134), which was of course problematic since it signalled segregation. Theophilus Shepstone was also instrumental in annexing the Transvaal in 1877. The display therefore unfolds as a non-Afrikaner and non-African space. This display was not challenged during Transformation for the reason that anglophile images were not used in political propaganda during apartheid. Anthea Bristow (1995) formulates this in the following words: 'Colonial cringe is so genteel, it never looks its victim in the face, it never marshals the facts and attacks'.

The *History Hall* has political references and was racially zoned. Drawing on Dovey (2005: 383), Massey (1994: 5) and Shields (1991: 31), I suggest that the display embodied differences in the social hierarchy, institutionalised boundaries, secured the identity of place

¹³³ The first historian was appointed in 1989 (Coan 1996-03-30).

and stabilised a constructed meaning. The zoned room denied representation of urban history to Africans, Indians and Coloureds and further denied a racially mixed history. It must be acknowledged, however, that the *History Hall* was planned to include aspects of the Indian community from the 1980s (Stuckenberg 1984-11-09). Drawing on Lefebvre (1991: 120-121), Giddens (1984: 1146) and Shields (1991: 29), I argue that space was neither a substance nor a reality, but became fetishised as such through displays, and holds value to the person who experiences it. Displays in this assessment become symbols for express states of mind and power. The *History Hall* manifested what were imperative images during the 1970s; this unfolded as anglophile representation of the colonial era and constructed an anglophile identity. Through the display the museum visualised the idea of power. Past time was used as an image, in reality representing the 1970s. I hold that in the 1970s this display reaffirmed national values and prompted a degree of national unity among Whites as suggested by Pieter Willem Botha¹³⁴ in 1968 (*The Natal Witness* 1968-05-18).

Wright and Mazel (1987: 65) argue that Whites were synonymous with progress and that this was used to justify domination of Africans. The display showed how White settlers lived in Natal from 1870 (*The Natal Witness* 1972-11-08). The year 1870 has political significance; it marked the period when the British imperial forces invaded (KwaZulu) Natal, heralding the end of the Boer Republic and the beginning of the civil war in Zululand (1879-1884). This display celebrated the British Empire and the victory over both Boer and Zulu. There was nothing objective in the display; it was a pure manifestation of politics. But it materialised itself as an objective version of a stable urban home using the medium of domestic appliances, very similar to the way in which the Voortrekkers were presented. Tolia Kelly (2003: 315-316) holds that a home was a site where history was linked with the past material culture and formed a texture of identification. An urban home became a symbol of victory and permanence, not just in the past but also in the present. The display was opened at a time when the social environment was segregated and the political climate fairly stable for Whites, and was therefore a celebration of their achievements. Transformation failed to see the political space due to well hidden ideological references.

¹³⁴ In his role as deputy minister of international affairs. Botha was Prime Minister between 1978-1984.

The planning of the period rooms in the *History Hall* had great significance. Baudrillard (1996: 15) suggests that the arrangement of furniture offers a faithful image of the social structure and the relationship within the family group. The family group in this case can be replaced with the anglophile realm. Merleau-Ponty (2004: 288) holds that the space was not only a place where things were arranged but a place where things were made possible. I hold that anglophile identity became visualised in this display through the arrangement of objects. The objects assumed emotional value, served as symbolic boundary-markers (Baudrillard 1996: 16), and the orientation of the objects represented the orientation of the world (Merleau-Ponty 2004: 288). The Natal Museum wanted to show a rich, stable and urban White society, not backyards, a kitchen or a racially mixed society. It was a 'hyper-reality', a reality that looks real and is therefore experienced as such (Eco 1985, Gottdiener 1986).

While the Natal Museum celebrated the centenary of the English settlement, the Msunduzi Museum (VM) staged a display of the Voortrekker Republic (VMAR 1972, NMAR 1970/1971, 1973/1974). Grundlingh and Sapire (1989: 25) hold that central to Afrikaner history was an idealised version of the Voortrekker Republics which were symbolically rooted and represented a successful period in Afrikaner history. The two museums showed victory in their own way that was also opposing each other. Transformation has emphasised that the museum showed White heritage, but has not taken into consideration that there are at least two conflicting versions. White heritage only stands as a unified symbol when compared to Indian, Coloured or African heritage.

The Niemand Report (1975: 13) writes that the Church of Vow was hopelessly inadequate for displays and a call to extend the use of the museum as a church was made again. The Church of Vow fulfilled two important roles: as church and as a memorial reaffirming Afrikaner identity. These aspects made it impossible to accommodate any other heritage. The *Niemand Report* (1975: 13) found the Msunduzi Museum (VM) so inadequate that it suggested that the collection should be displayed in the Natal Museum instead. Despite this the Msunduzi Museum (VM) continued its display plans, preparing a display of fire-arms hampered due to lack of space and displaying instead smoking articles, jewellery and photographs (VMAR 1975, 1976). International visitors made comments on 'the high regard that [sic] they held our heroic ancestors' (VMAR 1976). That could be one of the reasons for the decision to focus on the history of the Voortrekkers not only in Natal but in South Africa as a whole (NVM 1976-06-22). In 1978 the display started to change, introducing 'new objects' and labels supplied

with new information (VMAR1978). These displays were part of the museum's development to become less a heritage site and more a historical museum, as a result of the appointment of its first professional director Pols.

7.3 New directions

The Natal Museum appointed an archaeologist in 1974 to better care for the objects (NMAR 1974/1975, Stuckenberg 1984-11-09). Therefore, following Pred (1990: 10-11), I suggest that the production of space (display) can be seen both as the medium and outcome of human agency. South African archaeologists during the 1970s and 1980s have been described as either 'colluding to obscure a rich precolonial heritage' or as 'underground resistance fighters' (Shepherd 2003: 837). Research produced by staff-members, Mazel and Wright (1987), Hall (1988) and Mazel and Stewart (1987) shows that the museum could be categorised under the latter.

The plans for the display *Story of Peoples' History in Southern Africa (SOPHISA)* started in 1979 and formed a discrepancy between the government and the museum agents. The display contributed to questioning apartheid cultural propaganda. Mazel and Stewart (1987) have shown that history-books at the time taught that Whites and Africans immigrated to South Africa simultaneously. Mitchell holds that pre-colonial history was not taught in schools until 1996 and Christian National Education (CNE), the national basis of education from 1967-1993, ignored the results of archaeologists during apartheid and denied agropastoralism south of the Limpopo (Mitchell 2002: 414). The segregation of homelands, forced removal and occupations by Whites were justified historically by perpetrating the myth that groups arrived in South Africa at the same time (Esterhuysen 2000: 160). During apartheid, school books stressed primitiveness, physical distinctiveness and decline after European colonisation of African groups (Mitchell 2002: 414). Aron Mazel¹³⁵ told *The Natal Witness* that to include a pre-colonial history display was a way to remove prejudice and promote a better self-image among African children (Pillay 1996).

Before 1974 several smaller archaeological displays existed in the museum, one of which was constructed by Ernest Warren (NMAR 1974/1975). Pre-colonial history was displayed with undated artefacts and with no insight into the dynamic changes of pre-history (Wright &

¹³⁵ An archaeologist previously employed at the Natal Museum.

Mazel 1987: 302). *SOPHISA* aimed to present African groups as not ethnically fixed groups who arrive in South Africa simultaneously to Whites; such research had circulated since the 1960s but had not been accessible to the general public (Swift 1977). The display was political, since it legitimised an African presence, giving them a historic right to land which they could only selectively own. John Wright¹³⁶ stated to *The Natal Witnesses*, ‘it will take a long time before the new views gain general acceptance. The stereotypes are very strongly entrenched at all levels of public consciousness’ (Swift 1977).

Archaeology became a powerful tool to change people’s perception about the past. *SOPHISA* was one of the reasons why the Natal Museum was less criticised during Transformation, since it addressed Transformation ideals in line with African nationalist ideals that functioned favourably for the museum during Transformation. The *SOPHISA* coincided with the planning of other transformative actions, e.g., the museum experimentation with display texts in Zulu to accommodate African visitors (NMAR 1982/1983). Perhaps a reaction to political events such as the 1976 student uprising, since, as Snail (1993: 298) holds, language has been seen as a vehicle for culture and resistance in South Africa.

The Natal Museum wanted to connect the ethnographic and archaeological displays and address them thematically (NMAR 1980/1981, *The Natal Witness* 1978-12-16). This made it possible for them to show similarities between cultures. Tim Maggs¹³⁷ states that the themes of the display were practically unknown to visitors and that there was a strong element of ‘origins’ (Maggs 1980-04-15: 7). Martin Hall¹³⁸ (1980: 1) writes:

We have attempt [sic] to break with the traditional barriers between ethnography and archaeology and present instead a coherent narrative of South African history. We have taken this story through to the present day in the belief that the past explains the present and that in this manner historical research assumes relevance. This has involved an attack on a number of standard historical assumptions which have been replaced through recent research but which remain entrenched in the public mind. Thus our display will be honest but may be controversial.

When archaeologists were appointed at the Natal Museum, history was no longer treated as a passive object, but was interpreted as being socially and politically constructed and having meaning in a complex socio-political climate. The archaeologists actively challenged the normative narrative, in articles, display proposals and displays. Their awareness of the role

¹³⁶ A historian at the University of Natal (now University of KwaZulu-Natal) affiliated to the Natal Museum.

¹³⁷ An archaeologist previously employed at the Natal Museum.

¹³⁸ An archaeologist previously employed at the Natal Museum.

that science played as a social and political construct was one of the most crucial aspects for the displays to become more inclusive and was the precipitating factor of Transformation.

The *SOPHISA* was stylistically influenced by the *History Hall* but continued to build on evolutionary typologisation of history and artefacts. This was, however, a deliberate choice. *SOPHISA* was chronological because, as Maggs (1980-04-15: 2) states, there was little public awareness of the historical periods before AD 800. There are, however, obvious problems with evolution theory. First, it is a eurocentric tool of classification that negatively supported social evolutionary theories of human development (cp Lionnet 2004). But drawing on Fabian (1983: 19-25), Tilley (1999: 35-36), Bowker and Leigh Star (2000: 41) and Merleau-Ponty (2004: 240), I argue that evolutionary theories make time and space comprehensible, and facilitate presentation of facts and ways of taxonomically measuring human activity. Evolution theory becomes problematic when the narratives are considered as universal, objective truths and when presenting itself as a readymade explanation of human activities and developments.

One of my informants stated that her African students sometimes misunderstood the concept of evolution theory and thought it meant that Africans were inferior (Charlotte 2005-10-28). In *SOPHISA* the misunderstanding could occur since the display presented the San first, Africans in between, and Whites last on the evolutionary scale. There was a reason, however, for this. Maggs (1980-04-15: 2) and Esterhuysen and Smith (1998: 138) argue that evolution theory was excluded from all curriculum formulas under CNE. Esterhuysen (2000: 161) holds that archaeology was excluded because the substance of archaeology did not fit in with government values. Interviews have shown that the Natal Museum displays on evolution theory came to be regarded as especially important in the education of township learners in the 1990s. The education officers brought learners into the museum and guided them through the displays and the concepts of time and development (Lindiwe 2006-04-10). Evolutionary-constructed displays formed an important part in the museum's struggle during the turbulent 1990s to keep township learners in schools and help them understand nature and social sciences.

Current exhibition policy at the Natal Museum has used the concept of evolutionary theory to find a way for the museum to connect different displays. The exhibition policy envisages that the exhibition must strive to 'achieve continuity' and 'evolutionary time for the visitors' as

well as a 'logical passage through time and space', 'step-by-step explanation' and 'holistic overview of the world in which we live' (Natal Museum exhibition policy undated). It represents the traditions and way of the museum to spatially organise and present time. The museum also set out to '[lead] the visitor along a prescribed path through the galleries' and the exhibit should 'never appear to be unrelated or haphazard' (Natal Museum exhibition policy undated). The exhibition policy connected to the museum's architecture as a way of organising displays and linked different spaces, modes of interpretation and classification systems into one unity. It deconstructed the timelessness that had been applied to material culture, and showed displays as dynamic and progressive processes rather than as a static tradition. In this way it became a tool in Transformation.

While South Africa faced internecine and political violence, the Msunduzi Museum (VM) displayed furniture and the Natal Museum displayed themes such as the Natal Carbineers, World War I and II, the Anglo-Boer war and The Anglo-Zulu war¹³⁹ (VMAR 1981, NMAR 1984/1985). The themes in the Natal Museum related to war and showed a successful British imperialism in an international and South African context. They also related to male identity. Morell (2001: 157) has shown that the male anglophile identity in (KwaZulu) Natal during the colonial period was focused around militarism. This ideal was deployed in the 1980s displays where the military colonial past became a powerful platform from which a distinctive anglophile identity could be argued. I suggest that anglophile identity and heritage were further made distinctive through connecting to themes such as World War I and II and so re-connecting to Britain as a 'home country' and implying a difference from other group heritages.

These displays co-existed with the 1970s and 1980s academic reworking of the Great Trek that connected the Afrikaner uniqueness to the state policy of promoting separate nationalism (Grundlingh & Sapiro 1989: 20). The Natal Museum acted on this academic climate but renegotiated it in the context of anglophile heritage. They were reconnecting to the Afrikaner rewriting, using the same time frame, victories over other people, as well as the sentiments of a 'home country'. The displays in the Natal Museum were a way to emphasise a difference from the Afrikaner's attempt to create a White state-supported unified mythology, or a cause of the reworking of the Great Trek.

¹³⁹ The displays were dismantled in late 2007.

A year before South Africa pronounced a state of emergency in 1986 (Davenport & Saunders 2000: 692), a cast of a White woman¹⁴⁰ was incorporated into the period rooms in the *History Hall*¹⁴¹ (NMAR 1984/1985). In the photographic archive I found that a cast of an African woman was also made, but she was never incorporated into the dioramas. This was explained by my informant Gilbert (2006-05-05), who stated that there had previously been objections from African visitors about the mannequins of Africans in other displays. Placing mannequins into the room was en-populating, engendering and en-racing the space. Giddens (1984: 129) suggests that the body became zoned in line with the structural activities expressed in space. I hold that the mannequins represent the embodiment of the nation and its values. This was a spatial manifestation imbued with power and symbolism. This means that the 1970s structures were enhanced in the 1980s, made understandable and communicated through the White engendered mannequins' bodies. It is important to note that it originally included images of Africans, but that they were excluded because of critique from Africans. The space with an African mannequin would have changed the outcome of the display; it would have en-raced it. But it is questionable whether Transformation would have experienced it as inclusive.

In a newspaper article it was argued that the *History Hall* would provide for the 'need for the visitor to identify with the person, life and times envisaged' (Staniland 1981). But my informant held that it was too 'clean' and therefore impossible to identify with (Bill 2006-04-18). Dominy (1992: 11) claimed that Africans found the display off-putting because they could not identify with it. My informant who constructed the display said that it was never meant to be identified with; it was meant for the visitor to ask questions (Gilbert 2006-05-05). When the display was constructed it identified who was a member of the urban landscape and the nation and who was excluded. At present this reminds visitors of White domination and they cannot identify with this heritage. A male high-school student told me he was not interested in White history and was therefore not interested in the display. This is a blunt rejection of a large part of the nation's history and shows little sign of reconciliation or nation-building.

¹⁴⁰ Later two men, a girl and an older woman were incorporated.

¹⁴¹ One of my informants told me that these dolls caused a bit of a problem since African visitors thought that the museum had murdered people and stuffed them (Nigel 2006-04-11).

Normative historical narrative during apartheid presented history about the colonial urban landscape as exclusively White, although it was not. Consequently displays like these became zoned as White and were highly contested. DAC has shown a disinterest in White colonial history because they were the dominant historical approach during apartheid. During Transformation a need to deconstruct White narratives and incorporate an especially African narrative was expressed. My fieldwork data has shown a disinterest in revisiting old historical displays to incorporate new Indian, Coloured, African and White versions of history. This is mainly because the museums want to produce new displays; old displays still exist and continue to communicate structures of separation. The assumption that diversity unifies has kept the historical representations apart rather than trying to bring the historical narrative together. My conclusion, based on the analysis of past displays, is that the assumption of diversity continues to build on the separatism of culture and does not allow a unified, multicultural, integrated South African history. The focus on African history at present replaced the previous focus on White history. It is more a question of replacement than an expansion of knowledge. As it functions now, as a nationalistic narrative, it delimits possibilities for a multiple and multicultural united heritage.

The *History Hall*'s narrative of the 'White' urban landscape was, when the mannequins were introduced, en-raced and engendered. Before the mannequins were introduced, the room was gender free, but now the difference between men and women is embodied and zoned. Massey (1994: 4, 70) holds that the spatial organisation of a room was integral to the production of history and politics. Moi (1997: 106) suggests that the body in space assumed an act; the body was not an object but a situation and created an image of the world and how it was perceived. According to Massey (1994: 10), women personify the home and stood for something that was left behind; in this case it represented a loss of security. The female mannequins on display symbolised, in the context of the violent 1980s socio-political climate, a desired national security. This was articulated through a heteronormative and stable home and pride in a eurocentric origin. The mannequins embodied a safe home, the right to a 'home' in South Africa and in Britain as the 'home country'. The norms that the mannequins embodied reinforced the domestic material culture on display and enhanced the division of gender roles.

The male mannequin underlined male stereotypes – men working, in contrast to passive women. Porter (1991: 193-204) argues that masculinity and femininity constructed in museums were central to the production of meaning. Femininity was constructed in a

subordinated relation to masculinity, a concept seen throughout the displays yet not addressed during Transformation. How gender roles were portrayed in the displays gives an idea of the virtues of society and how they differ, depending on whether it was an Afrikaner or an anglophile display presenting White heritage. The Afrikaner woman was portrayed as a religious, domestic, hard-working *volksmoeder*, whereas the English woman was a serene, urban, middle-class wife.¹⁴² The Afrikaner man was a religious farmer or a priest, while the English man¹⁴³ was urban, military and academic. During Transformation, however, these different images were clustered together under the aegis of White domination. During Transformation White heritage became polarised Transformation ideals and was othered against African heritage. It was appropriately addressed, as presenting a neglected multivocal history, but it diminished the multicultural history of ‘cultural groups’ and limited united South African heritage.

7.4 Finding a new self and a new other

In 1982 the Msunduzi Museum (VM) discovered that no one was responsible for the displays; and two years later they were in urgent need of a social scientist to research cultural history (VMAR 1982, 1984). The museum started to try and expand with the aim of changing into a cultural history museum in that it had acknowledged the different ‘populations’ and ‘language groups’ in Natal. They approached the Department of Education Arts and Science to become a cultural history museum in 1984 (letter from Pols 1983-12-12, letter from Pols 1984-05-29, Memorandum van Hoofde 1982). The Natal Museum did not regard this as duplicating their activities but rather supported it (letter from Stuckenberg 1984-06-27) and held that to broaden the museum’s historical perspective would benefit the country. Stuckenberg stated that if ‘cultural history’ was the representation of White history, then all aspects were not represented in the area’s museums (Stuckenberg 1984-11-09). The Msunduzi Museum’s (VM) ability to change their display activities was during apartheid dependent on the approval of the Department of Education Arts and Science that they sought. The display activities could therefore be seen as a direct reflection of government decisions.

¹⁴² In the display the old lady is passively resting on a sofa awaiting a cup of tea. The younger lady is half naked, admiring herself in the mirror.

¹⁴³ In the display the man faced the wall, presumably doing paperwork. He appeared distant just as the state politics and leadership appeared to be distant in the social environment.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) built, in relation to this, a display on the Anglo-Boer war. The war was used as a unifying aspect, since it signified resistance against British imperialism. The theme was connected to the museum since, as explained to me by my informants, the war could be regarded as a continuation of the conflict between the English and the Afrikaners that led to the Great Trek and to the war in which the Voortrekkers or their decedants fought (Eva 2006-03-03, Marie 2006-11-03). During Transformation the museum was encouraged to move away from being a single-theme museum as early as the 1980s. In the 1980s it was not about constructing a multicultural museum, but about finding new concepts of Afrikanerdom, a new self. It was an attempt to explore new ways to relate and represent different White heritages, meditate the social landscape, and represent it in the museum.

In March 1988 the display *Portuguese Age of Discoveries*¹⁴⁴ was officially opened in the Natal Museum on the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese arrival. The display was part of *SOPHISA* (NMAR1987/1988), but was constructed and opened out of chronological and planned order. It was described as ‘an important aspect of our past as [the Portuguese] were the first contact between Europe and South Africa’s indigenous people’ (Rennie 1986). This display exemplified the ambivalence of Transformation in the museum. The Natal Museum was on the one hand trying to open up to other groups, but on the other was celebrating White heritage in nationalistic ways. This representation of the self showed no aspects of Afrikaner or anglophile identity. Yet the representation fitted with anglophile ideals of conquest and discovery, similar to objectives expressed in the *Du Toit Report* (1949).

The *Portuguese Age of Discoveries* was different to *History Hall* as it suggested contacts between Whites and Africans. My informants were cautious when explaining that the display caused a lot of resentment among staff-members (Ada 2006-03-21, Gilbert 2006-05-05); they refused to go into detail because their critique was explicitly made against director Stuckenberg. They described the display as out of the planned order of displays, and as much larger than the rest. It was also emphasised that the museum certainly did not need another White heritage display depicting only a fragment of the population’s history (Ada 2006-03-21, Steph 2006-04-04, Gilbert 2006-05-05). After staging this display the museum established

¹⁴⁴ The display featured a ship-like construction that one could crawl into and centred around the Portuguese Indian Ocean trade, life on board a sixteenth century Portuguese vessel and Portuguese shipwreck along the KwaZulu-Natal coast (Our Dynamic Past: a southern African story). The display was later demolished and replaced.

a display focus group ensuring that decisions were taken democratically and no longer driven by one person's interest (Gilbert 2006-05-05).

The Victorian architecture of the building changed in 1984 when the floor of the balconies was extended, resulting in floor-space that needed to be filled. To solve the problem Zulu, 'Bushman', and non-South African artefacts were displayed as a temporary solution until the permanent exhibition was completed (Gilbert 2006-05-04 NMAR 1984/1985, 1983/1984, 1986/1987). At the time of refiguring the self the museum also had to reconsider the other. In the Annual Report of 1988/1989 the Natal Museum stated that they needed to contribute better to the appreciation of African art and reflected over the concept art/artefact. What was originally displayed, a mishmash of spectacular African objects (Gilbert 2006-05-05), now became an appreciation of art. The artefacts were now reclassified. In 1998 the display was officially renamed *African Art*.¹⁴⁵ The display text states that the reinterpretation of the material as art was an acknowledgement of post-colonial South Africa (NMAR 1988/1989, 1998/1999). In 1998 the 'Jolles Collection' was incorporated into *African Art* (NMAR 1998/1999, William 2006-03-06), and the carvers gained recognition as artists and were no longer anonymous carvers producing craft (Leeb du Toit 2005: 133-134). In between 1984-1998 the display was in the limbo of being an ethnographic display and an art display. Frans Prins¹⁴⁶ said to *The Natal Witness* that up until this time 'African culture' had been neglected 'as work of art in most museums and the Natal Museum didn't think of giving African culture the recognition it deserves' (Mngadi 1995).

Craft repositioned as art was a post-structuralist and post-colonial statement. Fisher (2001: 412) writes that there is a hierarchy between low art (craft) and high art (fine art) and that there is a tendency to classify artefacts according to this dichotomy. Steiner (2002: 403) suggests that elevating craft into art was one of the highest recognitions in museums. I hold that by doing so the maker and the maker's culture became repositioned. In a South African context this has come to be a statement against eurocentric classifications. Nettleton (1989: 24) and Bouquet (2001: 10) argue that the museum must today make up for the eurocentric way of classifying culture. But I argue that elevating artefact into art is also a eurocentric

¹⁴⁵ The display *African Art* has since its construction changed several times and during the time of my field work the objects of displays were reorganised, renarrated and also reused in other displays.

¹⁴⁶ An anthropologist previously employed at the Natal Museum.

classification no different from other eurocentric classifications and can be seen as bigotry making up for old colonial 'sins'.

The reclassification of artefact into art is a reaction against what Nettleton (1989: 24) describes as the ethnographer's lack of interest in indigenous art. Steiner (2002: 399) suggests that the colonisers regarded Africans as so uncivilised that they did not think they could produce art. I suggest that the attempt to reclassify was a way to reverse the hierarchy of objects and a way to construct other meanings and offer equally plausible explanations. Shelton (1992: 27) and Ames (2004: 82) argue that most curators defined art in terms of a post-renaissance western framework and that this concept left non-western artefacts to speak for themselves. In the *African Art* display there was minor information attached to the objects. The supplied information was too much to make it an art display, and too little to make it an ethnographic display. It exists therefore in a limbo between the two. I argue, in line with Reynolds (1989: 116), that the reclassification was a result of lack of documentation during the collection process. Therefore the renaming changed the political space, but not how the objects were perceived.

Ethnographic objects placed in an art museum are exhibited for their aesthetic value, but in an ethnographic museum they are placed in a social and historical context (Davison 1990: 40). Bal (1996a: 59, 76-78) has highlighted the problem of converting artefacts into art objects. She believes that a perception of an object lies not only in the classification, but in conjunction with the place in which the object is perceived. The character of the place stipulates the experience of the object. In the Natal Museum objects will therefore continue to be perceived as ethnography, since the place is not an art museum. Today the display shows the pride of pan-African, pre-colonial heritage under the aegis of the African Renaissance. Although it aims at empowering the cultures from which the artefacts originated they still remain eurocentrically classified. The difference is that under its new name the classification seems politically more coherent. During Transformation objects appeared differently because of the experience of being 'in' Transformation. Yet artefacts are subject to the visitor's assumption of the object and in most cases are admired as being exotic and different.

In the late 1980s while the Natal Museum started a critical approach, the Msunduzi Museum (VM) followed a conventional approach and expanded the representation of the Afrikaner community. At the 150-year celebration of the Great Trek in 1989, the Msunduzi Museum

played a part in the festivities¹⁴⁷ (VMAR 1989). A five-year plan for the museum proposed that the Church of Vow should be displayed as a church, with a display of bibles, documents, kitchen utensils, cloths, personal adornments and photos (VMAR 1989, letter from Retief 1989-04-14). Pols describes the display in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) as representing various aspects of Voortrekker life (Pols 1988: 163-164). My informant Francis (2006-11-18) claimed that the displays during this time were not done by professional staff and were elementary. Researchers have shown that religion was a fundamental part of Afrikaner traditional values and that it functioned as a synergy between religious, political and cultural leadership. Afrikaner churches upheld patriarchy as the cornerstone of a healthy society and connected women to the home and to childrearing responsibilities. They became a symbol for the survival of White domination (Du Pisani 2001: 158, 163, author not listed 1992: 12). The Board of Trustees, the decision makers of the museum, were described as conservative and members of the NP by my informant Francis (2006-11-18). If this is correct it is possible that the display communicated religious traditionalist values of Afrikaners in a more direct way.

The display became a place where Afrikaners could reconnect with the values that their identity was constructed on. Drawing on Graham et al (2005: 30), I suggest that the display fulfilled the need to connect the past with the present. Drawing on Delmont (1993: 87) I argue that museums could be seen as places where heroes were created and history was manipulated in inspiring the nation. In this case the display was never meant to be objective or to communicate anything but values linked to Afrikanerdom. It was constructed exclusively for Afrikaners and secondarily for other groups. Something needed to be acknowledged when scrutinising Transformation because displays have generally been addressed as producing objective knowledge. The museum was meant to represent a one-sided view, which makes their representation easier to criticise than that of the Natal Museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) embarked on a nationalistic approach in the late 1980s. This may be because, as Delmont (1993: 77) describes it, Afrikanerdom challenged African nationalism and acknowledged Whites as being just as African. This also explains why Transformation did not shun Afrikaner heritage, but protected it post-1994 and why Afrikaner heritage is still displayed in museums.

¹⁴⁷ The programme in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) focused on the wagon built in 1938 which had travelled through Natal during the celebrations in the 1930s.

While the Msunduzi Museum (VM) started negotiating the self in its displays, the Natal Museum became more socio-politically conscious and launched the idea of producing displays for children. This can be seen as a cornerstone in the work, design and identity of the Natal Museum displays from this time on.¹⁴⁸ The education department of Natal Museum worked with township learners and Stuckenberg (1990: 1) and Mtshali (undated) noted that the deteriorating economic situation in the townships and school boycotts resulted in knowledge gaps. The museum recognised the black¹⁴⁹ townships' need for better education¹⁵⁰ and made an attempt to change the displays to accommodate learners and enforce the museum's role as an educator. This was already in line, before 1994, with later Transformation ideals that emphasised the museum's role as an educational support to schools. This had ideological roots in the BCM and notably in the RDP.

The Natal Museum wanted to present science to children in an interactive, exploring and experimental way (Stuckenberg 1990: 2). The director Stuckenberg visited the USA to learn more about how this could be implemented. This resulted in tactile displays that addressed children explicitly, relating them to the educational officer's efforts to convey numeracy, time, pictures and measurement to (mainly) African children (Stuckenberg 1990: 2-3). These were needs that the education department had identified through the work with township learners which came to be especially visible in the *SOPHISA* display. The display could be seen as the physical evidence of a museum trying to be socially conscious to accommodate to the society what it most needed.

Transformation of displays in the Natal Museum took place before the government Transformation was initiated. The museum aimed to help township learners out of the negative effect and damage that Bantu education policy had caused. At this time the displays were used as an educational tool and not, as later, to convey political ideals. My conclusion is that Transformation was far more progressive in the late apartheid days than after 1994. One of my informants articulated this in the words, 'First we had Transformation, and then we didn't' (Monica 2006-03-10). After 1994 Transformation became more predominantly driven by political ideas and nationally stipulated policies that strictly steered the process in a

¹⁴⁸ The reason for this initiative was a conference the director attended that dealt with education in a future South Africa.

¹⁴⁹ In this context they refer mainly to African townships.

¹⁵⁰ It was recognised that African children reacted negatively to the eurocentric syllabi and were poorly prepared for school. At the time about 50% of all Africans in the country were illiterate and 89% were African pupils. In KwaZulu at the time only 2% received matriculation (Stuckenberg 1990:1, Mtshali undated).

uniform heritage expression. It aimed at being nation-building, but at the same time left little space for regional and individual interpretation of multicultural diversity.

As apartheid was drawing towards its end, the director and staff-members of the Natal Museum acknowledged that the museum could not escape the criticism of its displays being eurocentric and inadequate (Stuckenberg 1987, Wright & Mazel 1987, NMAR 1990/1991). But due to lack of funding from the government, the improvement and development of the museum's displays were proving almost impossible. From an outside perspective it could be perceived that the museums were static. The criticism of the museum during Transformation was slightly unjust. An example was the ten years of planning and building to finish the first phase of *SOPHISA*¹⁵¹ which was first opened officially to the public in 1994.

The *SOPHISA* display set out to show a common heritage of all people emphasising the long period of shared evolution (Mazel 1989a). The message was that human evolution made everyone Africans with a common heritage in Africa. Differences in physical features were a recent adaptation and everyone had common biological and cultural roots, from which South Africa's complex heritage developed (Ward 1989, SOMISA planning group 1988). The emphasis on common rather than separate heritage was a key factor for real change in the museum context, since shared heritage had not until this point been shown in museums. This reveals an early democratisation of the museum space. The emphasis on common rather than separate heritage was a reaction to apartheid policies. Transformation ideals have emphasised multiculturalism under the aegis that diversity unifies, but *SOPHISA* wanted to show what people had in common despite the complexities of enforced separation. It meant to show that culture could differ but people should be seen as equal. At the time this was a political statement. One of my informants recalled a conversation with an upset White visitor who complained that Africans were wrongly presented in the display, because Africans were not educated enough to have the kind of culture presented. The visitor also meant that the San could not have painted rock art because she considered them subhuman (Monica 2006-03-10), which of course in today's context is not only a highly racist statement but also an uneducated one.

¹⁵¹ The *SOPHISA* display shows the history of Southern Africa with the evolution of man both physically and culturally. Stone tools explain the phases of the Stone Age next to a display of San hunter-gatherers, showing lifestyle and rock art. Dynamic development of Nguni agriculture continues the display. A display explaining Swahili, Zimbabwean and South African trade and towns follows. At present, with the Portuguese expansion and the first encounter with Whites in Africa, the display ends.

In 1992 the *Drakensberg Cave*, a life-size cave, was constructed.¹⁵² This display was the first of its kind in South Africa and was described as involving a high standard of realism (*The Natal Witness* 1993-03-18, NMAR 1992/1993). Realism and atmosphere become important for the exhibition department in creating an experience from which people can interpret and learn (Gilbert 2006-05-05). The museum aimed to produce a didactic, tangible display to make visitors able to relate to history, even with minor historical knowledge (Von Klemperer 1993). This initiative was connected to the above-mentioned emphasis on presenting history to illiterates and children. The *Drakensberg Cave* was constructed for those who might never get the opportunity to visit the mountain. It was aimed at teaching children what a cave with rock art looked like (Ada 2006-03-21). This way of displaying history was described as far removed from Victorian displays (Von Klemperer 1993). Victorian displays were regarded as static, racist and non-inclusive – values that stand in opposition to Transformation.

In 1990 the Msunduzi Museum (VM) started to plan new exhibitions, focusing on education (NVM 1990-11-22). But this never materialised in displays. The theme was most likely inspired by the fact that the main building where it was supposed to be staged was previously a school and that Stuckenberg (1984-11-09) had stressed the need to display the neglected history of education in the province. The meaning of the place influenced the themes of display as seen in the case of the Church of Vow. This reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between building and display produced problems when addressing and deconstructing stereotypes and nationalism.

The proposal for an educational display focused on Natal and the Voortrekkers during colonial times. The Church of Vow was suggested for display of religious themes and crafted objects (NVM 1990-11-22, Stuckenberg 1984-11-09). But the new building caused problems for the museum because staff did not know what to do with the space and did not have enough artefacts to display. Thus the Church of Vow continued to be used as a display hall, since the museum and the Board of Trustees were only interested in Voortrekker themes and budgeted for them only. The main building was filled with related topics (Francis 2006-11-18).

¹⁵² In the cave on one side there are two (adult and child) San mannequins looking out onto a Drakensberg landscape. On the cave wall one can find a variety of paintings traced from various original sites in the Drakensberg.

The above-mentioned developments must be seen in relation to the museum's attempt to professionalise the displays. Thus it employed a display artist in 1990. My informants told me that nothing in the sense of display had happened before this, and that the displays looked very old. The new display artist tried to update the displays but his suggestions did not fall well in the hands of the Board of Trustees and the director (Francis 2006-11-18, David 2006-11-08). Three years later the Board of Trustees took a decision that the museum should focus on portraying other groups (NVM 1993-04-22). Although this decision was passed, my informants explained that it was difficult to change the mindset of the Board of Trustees, because they were very conservative. It was only after 1994 that staff-members were given more influence and that the Board of Trustees extended its interest beyond Voortrekkers, religion and churches (Francis 2006-11-18).

This decision was the beginning of a ten-year-long transformation of the museum. They identified a need to be sensitive to other cultures and represented Indians and Africans more extensively in displays (NVM 1993-04-22). This meant that the museum was aware of the negative effect that an insensitively formulated display could have. Therefore they decided to make contact with the KwaZulu council and the ANC for development of African displays (NVM 1993-04-22), but before contact was made they applied for permission from the Department of Education Arts and Science to do so (letter from Wiedeman 1993-06-22). The department advised the museum to avoid a political profile, and to interpret Zulus and other groups in context, to include other cultural groups in relation to the Voortrekker theme, and to inform the department of the outcome (letter from Wiedeman 1993-06-22). The emphasis on being non-political was retained in the museum until director Pols retired. This was a way for the director and the museum, with its politically tainted Afrikaner themes, to survive Transformation.

At the same time the Natal Museum embarked on a programme of self-criticism¹⁵³ to discuss how the museum image, displays and community involvement could be updated and how to work in the politically changing environment of the 1990s (working group 1, 1992). The museum came to the conclusion that there was a disjunction between the ethnographic display¹⁵⁴ and the *History Hall*. They expressed a need to update and connect existing

¹⁵³ On 31st July 1992 the Natal Museum composed a working group for this purpose. The group held 20 meetings between August and November.

¹⁵⁴ Now known as *African Art*.

displays and to make them more multicultural and relevant in regard to language and representation. An Indian theme was suggested for inclusion in the *History Hall* and it was proposed that the eurocentrism in the hall should be scrutinised (working group 1, 1992). The process was described to *The Natal Witness* as being to ‘reflect the multicultural¹⁵⁵ make-up of Natal’s people’ (von Klemperer 1993). This document was the climax of the initiative of changes undertaken during the late 1980s, as well as the starting-point for Transformation.

An important part of the Natal Museum Transformation was the display *Amandla - The struggle for rights: peace or violence* that opened on the anniversary of the Soweto student uprising on 16th June 1993 (NMAR 1993/1994, Dominy & Khoza 1995: 18). The choice of date was a powerful political statement for a national museum to make. It clearly showed the direction in which the museum wanted to proceed. Dominy and Khoza (1995: 29) write that the project enabled the museum to reach out to communities whose histories and concerns had not been represented and addressed previously. The display showed a wide selection of documents, banners, T-shirts, apartheid songs, banning orders and memorabilia from the struggle as well as aspects from the White elections. It also featured photographs.¹⁵⁶ International themes included aspects of the struggle for freedom in East Europe and features of Martin Luther King and Gandhi (NMAR 1993/1994, *The Natal Witness* 1993-06-17, Maqetuka 1993-06-24). This was the first time that Africans were presented in a political light and not seen from a traditional rural perspective. This display also set the standard for how displays about apartheid in the future should be focused.

Dominy and Khoza (1995: 29) argue that this display served as a catalyst for Transformation of the Natal Museum. I hold that the museum had been transforming for some time in regard to how history was represented and that *Amandla* was a change following political ideas. The museum could not, without a long process of change, have staged a political display like this one. This was the first time that African political paraphernalia was displayed in a museum and it acknowledged an active voice within African societies. It was a change from the focus on rural and traditional aspects. The community involvement, the ideological aspects, the staff employed to do research, aspects of portraying ‘struggle culture’, and present-time African heritage were all catalysts for change in line with the later Transformation ideals. *Amandla*

¹⁵⁵ The Natal Museum in the early 1990s features the Gandhi 100 commemoration exhibition. The museum had earlier had several temporary Indian displays.

¹⁵⁶ These could not be published at the time, as they showed violent scenes.

was not received well by all visitors and caused a lot of reaction. ‘So that’s the sort of place this is – I’ll never come here again!’ commented a White visitor (Stuckenberg 1993-11-09). My informant explained that White people disliked being associated with apartheid and that there was a sudden denial of what had happened during apartheid (Nigel 2006-11-09). Displays like *Amandla* have become obligatory post-1994, but when it was mounted it was a bold and provocative statement at a time when the province was at civil war and the country was in a political turmoil.

7.5 Displaying a new nation

Transformation policies were not particularly concerned with museum displays. Museums had not formulated what displays meant to them or how they could be used; an exception was the Natal Museum. *MUSA* vaguely defined displays as object-based, visual and spatial (Pauw 1994: 13). Odendaal et al (1994: 6) write that *MUSA* criticised previous static exhibitions, but did not deal with how to bring display messages to the broader public. The *ACTAG* (1995: 60-61) was not criticised although it too failed to give suggestions as to how museums should produce or use displays. Transformation policies were unable to produce answers or practical solutions to display, although it was their responsibility to do so. Transformation aimed to alter displays from being collection-based to mediating meaning and messages, but the museum’s role as collection-based prevailed due to entrenched ideas.

Transformation was not a paradigm shift, but a dynamic process dependent on an awareness of new museology. Transformation consisted of a body of negotiations that took place before and after the democratic elections and materialised as political spaces in displays. Therefore the displays did not go from ‘bad’ to ‘good’ spaces, but from one political space to another, especially visible in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) that had always been more dependent on governmental decisions and less independent in cultural expressions when compared to the Natal Museum. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) was cautious in informing the minister and receiving suggestions and decisions from him for changes in the museum (NVM 1993-09-22). The political correctness was a strategy for the museum to survive. The Msunduzi Museum’s (VM) institutional strategy of employing normative, governmental ideas of how to present heritage was different to the Natal Museum’s more independent approach.

After 1994 the Msunduzi Museum (VM) embarked on a programme to become a multicultural museum. Mkhize and Mapalala, however, assert that few changes had been realised in the museum. 'This was due to the fact that the former champions of white exclusivist perspective who had previously been proactive in marginalising the histories of the hitherto marginalised became the new champions of 'change'' (Mkhize and Mapalala 2002). I agree with Mkhize and Mapalala that it must have been problematic to change perceptions and values. Their argument accentuates the importance of a multicultural workforce that could contribute to diversified perspectives of heritage and history. My informant reflected on this and said that being asked as a White to do an African exhibition was almost an 'outlandish' idea that involved a lot of 'irony'. He explained that it was ironical in the sense that an African exhibition was supposed to be an African person's expression and representation of history and heritage and not a White person's creation (Steph 2006-04-04). Transformation was a lengthy process and the rapid change demanded by the advocates of Transformation functioned in theory but not in practice.

Msunduzi Museum (VM) decided before the elections in 1994 to make changes based on the assumption that they would later be forced to do so. This involved presenting various 'cultural groups' and displays in Afrikaans, English and Zulu (NVM 1994-02-11). At the same time that they took precautions to preserve Afrikaner identity in the Church of Vow and Pretorius House, they produced multicultural displays fronting the streets to attract new visitors (VMAR 1994/1995, NVM 1995-07-27). Transformation for the museum meant at this stage to preserve Afrikaner identity and at the same time conform to a demanded multicultural inclusivity. Transformation was a very sensitive process and the Church of Vow was upgraded to 'make it historically more correct' (MEVM 1996-07-05). In other words, to make it more accurate in the political climate. The display was described as 'non-political and formed part of the cultural history of the people of South Africa' (MEVM 1996-07-05). The display was a materialisation of two different political agendas, but was articulated as non-political because it intended to depoliticise Afrikaner nationalism's use of the Voortrekkers.

To be more inclusive and avoid political implications, the museum started to consider developing as a multicultural music museum. The idea was presented as unique in South Africa, connectable to all because music was a universal language (letter from Steenkamp 1996-02-06, letter from Pols 1996-07-25). This allowed the museum to be multicultural and at the same time to include Voortrekker material culture. In a letter the museum called for

different artists' personal belongings, autographs and albums (letter from Steenkamp 1996-07-04). The museum wanted to make room for various kinds of music, but the proposal overemphasised White heritage, as one of my informant's agreed. He said that the museum wanted to focus on Afrikaner singers and that, when African artists such as Miriam Makeba were suggested, some of the Afrikaner singers refused to have their material displayed together with hers (Francis 2006-11-18). Despite its White overtones, this was a way to depoliticise the museum, avoid criticism and survive as an institution. Through interviews it became clear that staff-members experienced Transformation as carried out, not on an institutional level but on individual initiative by some staff-members. Consequently there was discrepancy as to what the museum showed in official reports and how the informants experienced the situation.

In 1994 the Natal Museum's *SOPHISA* display opened to the public. My informant stated that it had nothing to do with the democratic elections, but that the museum had completed the first section of the display (Monica 2006-03-10). Three years later the *New Way of Life*¹⁵⁷ opened to the public. This section focused on prehistoric Iron Age African farmers in Southern Africa. The title was chosen because the previous part of *SOPHISA* had focused on hunter-gatherers. The display reflected the extensive Iron Age research carried out by the museum, e.g., by Maggs (1980a, b) and bears traces of Hall's (1990) political determinism. Iron Age research during apartheid had political connotations and it was only in 1973 that the long Iron Age chronological sequence was established and enabled historical research to undermine the use of the Great Trek as a cornerstone for apartheid (Maggs 1993: 73-75). The display themes were centred on recent research such as the production of crops (Maggs & Whitelaw 1991), metal working (Miller & Whitelaw 1994), cattle herding and ceramics (Moon & Whitelaw 1996, Whitelaw 1996). This display, although constructed early in Transformation, was in line with the Transformation agenda that emphasised pre-colonial history. This was initiated to empower African history and create a history that was independent of colonial history.

SOPHISA's physical appearance changed due to rebuilding activities. My informant said that this removed the atmosphere of the display and the intimacy and mystery of history taking the

¹⁵⁷ The *New Way of Life* opened in the Natal Museum in 1997 and forms part of the *SOPHISA* display. It continues the chronological and descriptive journey of the archaeological story of Southern Africa and deals with farming and iron. The *New way of Life* presents 25 years of research in the Natal Museum and an understanding of the Iron Age communities' way of life during the first millennium AD (*The Natal Witness* 1997-11-28).

visitor back in time (Thomas 2005-10-02). Iron Age life in the display was deliberately polarised against the present, because pre-colonial history and traditionalism forms a platform for African nationalism. The curator stated to *The Natal Witness* that:

Archaeology can be a politically fraught discipline because we're dealing with people and their pasts. Even though the communities we study are dead and this allows us to remove ourselves from them, we still have to be aware they may be ancestors to people living today. Archaeology teaches us an appreciation of different cultures and different ways of viewing the world which, hopefully, we can pass on (*The Natal Witness* 1997-01-31).

The curator wanted to foreground deliberately a difference between today's existing Zulu cultures and past African farmers; to demonstrate that culture was dynamic, evolved and to avoid politicised ethnocentrism. When the Board of Trustees of the Natal Museum was introduced to the display they assumed, however, that it presented Zulu culture. One member said the ceramic pots on display, although not produced for hundreds of years, were the same as those produced by relatives of hers (Gustav 2006-11-07). Another informant said that the Board of Trustees consisted of IFP Zulu nationalists and that they did not understand that there was a difference between Zulu ethnic identity¹⁵⁸ and the Iron Age farmers¹⁵⁹ (Charlotte 2005-10-28). This complication reveals discrepancies between the Board of Trustees and the staff-members and visualises the difficulties of Transformation. The intentions were clearly different between the interpretations of the politically appointed Board of Trustees. The researchers were interested in presenting a non-politicised version of history.

Based on archaeological evidence the *New Way of Life* was moulded as a village with clay houses, and was deliberately made different from more contemporary Zulu homesteads to avoid political conflict and confusion. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty (2004: 350), I suggest that the display cases create an illusion of the past from where one could read a series of contexts, here showing that there was no Zulu culture AD 400, but rather African Iron Age farmers. Following Merleau-Ponty (2004: 478) and Massey (2005: 18), I suggest that the concept of time arose from the curator's relation to objects and showed the consequences of how the agents perceive the self and the other in both present and past. Objects that looked familiar, like ceramic pots, having a strong ethnic resonance in South Africa, might therefore be perceived as something that they were not. Hence the Board of Trustees' interpretation. The display, however, deconstructed the assumption of race based on language, dwellings, ethnic belonging and the idea of fixed identities of African groups. My informant Thomas (2005-10-

¹⁵⁸ The Zulu ethnic identity emerged about 150 years ago.

¹⁵⁹ Archaeologically the first traces of farming appeared in the region in 400AD.

02) chose a mix of ethnographic African objects to deliberately avoid the connection to Zulu material culture and Zulu nationalism. This did not mean that the curator was racially prejudiced; it meant that he did not want the space to unfold as nationalistic. The museum did not want to align politics with archaeological science and kept the representation of past cultures apart from the existing cultural political expressions.

Simultaneously political spaces unfolded in the museum. According to two of my informants, Gilbert (2006-05-05) and Steph (2006-04-04), and as implied in the Annual Report (1997/1998), the display *Sisonke*¹⁶⁰ was put up as a direct response to DACST demands. DACST visited the museum and perceiving it as not transformed enough, encouraged (or demanded) an urgent construction of a display of Zulu and African material culture. Over a limited time a White and an African curator developed the display, which focused on traditional and contemporary weapons, beadwork and apartheid struggle material. The aim was to illustrate that African culture was dynamic and forever changing. The display was consequently regarded as a major departure from traditional displays that portrayed African groups as living in the present-past (NMAR 1998/1999).

Sisonke narrated the development of Zulu identity in terms of material culture and internal and external politics without making reference to White heritage. It positioned conflict, politics and resolution within an African context, something that had not been done in displays before at the museum. The museum did not show conservative images of Zulu heritage, nor portray them as a unified group or fixed race that migrated to the area as apartheid propaganda proposed. Leeb du Toit (2005: 137), Dlamini (2001a: 198) and Guy (1979: xx), write that apartheid and African classifications of group-belonging were dependent on language, race, birthplace and descent. I suggest that this was deconstructed in *Sisonke*. Zulu identity became important because it juxtaposed White political identity and unified Zulu-speakers. At present, however, the situation is changing and different family groups within Zulu-speaking groups now constitute a more important identity indicator than prevailing Zulu identity. My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) stated that they wanted to display African history, but not in the typical way material culture was normally being displayed. They produced a display that they thought a bit controversial and focused on

¹⁶⁰ Sisonke means 'we are together'.

identity and group formation, ethnic and political identity, and on how this was manifested in Zulu material culture.¹⁶¹

The middle of the display had a hedged area where mannequins dressed in ‘quasi traditional clothing’ were placed and, according to my informant Gustav (2006-11-07), this was the essence of the display. He told me that this came to be disliked and misunderstood by visitors and staff-members and was eventually removed. He continued stating that they wanted to show the dynamics of Zulu heritage – how traditional and western aspects were blended. ‘Zuluness’ was not displayed as timeless, but as influenced by other cultural expressions. Zulu ANC members during apartheid and in internecine conflict used traditional clothing, with the ANC T-shirt, to show their political affiliation, since they feared being seen as IFP members. My informant noticed through his fieldwork in KwaZulu the merging between western and traditional cultures and used this to question stereotypes and produce a more complex narrative to make people question their own assumptions and avoid the typical South African dichotomisation of cultural expression (Gustav 2006-11-07).

Beadwork was displayed in *Sisonke* to represent territorial and clan affiliation and the female sphere. Preston-Whyte and Thorpe (1989: 128) and Klopper (1989: 33, 37) argue that beadwork embraced an ethnic, cultural and politically powerful symbolism associated with cultural tradition, politics, liberation and pan-African consciousness. The Inkatha movement in 1970s beadwork was related to women, fostering ethnic solidarity and notions on common cultural heritage. This was deconstructed in *Sisonke* which showed beadwork connection to different areas and Zulu-speaking groups that were not included or co-opted into the Zulu identity. This visualised changes within the Zulu identity. My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) intended in the display to show that groups that saw themselves as Zulus in the 1990s were not always welcome into the Zulu identity. Ethnic diversity of ‘Zuluness’ was not previously visualised in displays. The curators deconstructed the concepts of language, territory and ethnic identity as well as political roles and gave Africans a political voice in the past and present. They related the struggle for liberation to the beadwork and acknowledged female participation as an active political voice which, according to Cock (2001: 50), was uncommon as the ‘struggle’ was usually identified with men.

¹⁶¹ Lack of funding restricted the themes of the display and they used material culture from the existing ethnographic collection.

Alongside the walls, traditional weapons, spears, 'knopkieries' and home-made AK47s, all related to the identity and compared groups and areas, were displayed. The curators wanted to deconstruct and question complex and dynamic aspects of the concept of 'traditional weapons' as constituting political and ethnic identity (Gustav 2006-11-07). Weapons played a role in the manifestation of masculinity that rested on patriarchal privileges found in nationalist images of the Zulu warrior – a way for Inkatha to retain and construct a masculine dignity within a context of subjugation (Cock 2001: 44-45, Waetjen & Maré 2001: 195-206). The curators showed that homemade AK47s became symbols of supporting the 'struggle' and liberation (Gustav 2006-11-07). According to Cock (2001: 44-45), the AK 47 was also a symbol of revolution and resistance for Africans, but for Whites a symbol of terrorism.

The curators decided not to make a strong political statement because 1997 was a politically sensitive time due to internecine war in the Pietermaritzburg region mainly between the ANC and the IFP. Since the IFP was in power in KwaZulu-Natal and in control of DACST, and the ANC was in power across the country, there was a need to satisfy everyone (Gustav 2006-11-07). Therefore the curators did not make any reference to the Zulu royal house, otherwise commonly noted in museum displays. According to Guy (1979: 246), the royal house was used as a role model by political and African nationalist leaders. Since the identification with historical kings varied and was conflicting among, e.g., the ANC and Inkatha my informant Gustav (2006-11-07) expressed a need to exclude the image of kings from the display.

At the same time the Msunduzi Museum (VM) also mounted a Zulu display. The *Zulu Treasures Exhibition* was meant to show the 'dynamic aspects' of Zulu culture (Dlamuka 2000: 6). This was the first time African material culture was displayed in the museum without reference to the Voortrekkers. The opening of the *Zulu Treasures Exhibition*, bearing in mind the structural negotiations of the flagship institutions and the *Sisonke* exhibit in the Natal Museum, was a political make-up to satisfy the current political dispensation and enable the museum, in an unstable time, to continue to exist. The museum had made an effort to invite African school children (letter from Erasmus undated). Ben Ngubane, MEC of KwaZulu-Natal, opened the display and said to *The Natal Witness*:

... the treasures, drawn from museums and private collectors all over the country, illustrated the common but diverse heritage of KwaZulu-Natal, and represented a microcosm of the spirit of reconciliation and nation building which characterised the province (Bradley 1997-10-29).

Director Pols concurred: 'It is a unique and very important exhibition for everyone in this province' (Bradley 1997-10-29). When Ngubane addressed common and diverse heritage he meant that the display showed another side of the museum's activities, allowing African heritage expression within a formally White space, while at the same time addressing the conflict in KwaZulu-Natal by showing a common identity reflected in Zulu material as a unifying symbol. His statement expressed something quite different from what *Sisonke* was trying to show. Comparing *Sisonke* and Ngubane's speech one can see how different socio-political spaces unfold in museums.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) may have altered the display – the face to the public – but continued its usual activities of researching Voortrekker history. The new exhibition in the Jansen Extension centred on the Great Trek (1835-1842), from its inception to the British annexation of the area, but interpreted the material in a holistic manner showing migration, different lifestyles and interactions between groups (Ridley 1996, MEVM 1996-11-01, MEVM 1997-01-16). The re-representation of Voortrekker history reflected the museum's new narrative aiming at reshaping the presentation of the self. Following Merleau-Ponty (2004: 300, 389), I suggest that objects can only be understood as far as they are experienced. Therefore interpretations and the reinterpretation of history are possible only as far as the agents and visitors understand and perceive objects or displays. Reinterpretation can stretch the expectations of objects if staged differently, allowing the possibility to be perceived in several new ways if it is not in conflict with the person's perception. This is also why a multicultural staff was called for during Transformation. It was believed that this would allow a reinterpretation and further exploration of the meaning of material culture.

There is a clear discrepancy between Mkhize¹⁶² and Mapalala¹⁶³ (2002), who regarded the Msunduzi Museum (VM) as non-inclusive and as stereotyping Africans, and the government's view of the museum. In 1997 the renewed display of the Voortrekker theme was visited by Roger Jardine¹⁶⁴ who was pleasantly surprised by the result and positive about the Voortrekker theme which he considered to be of national significance (MEVM 1997-07-14). DACST encouraged the museum to continue to explore the Voortrekker theme and renegotiate Afrikaner identity. Research in the Museum was predominantly based on

¹⁶² The director at the time.

¹⁶³ Member of the Board of Trustees at the time.

¹⁶⁴ The director-general of DACST and an ANC affiliate.

Voortrekker history, with a religious focus (MEVM 1997-01-16). The mission statement and the Annual Report (1998/1999), however, show a museum torn between what they were (Afrikaner) and what they were obliged to become (multicultural, African). The museum wanted to create the impression that they were determined to become inclusive and multicultural.

A new display in the Church of Vow came to depict the *Education of the Voortrekker Child* (1998). This display stems from suggestions presented during the 1980s and 1990s. Giliomee (2003: 177) suggests that Voortrekkers have long been regarded as a deeply religious group. The display presented Voortrekkers conventionally and focused on religious activities. The display functioned as a new space where Afrikaners could reconnect and reaffirm their identity. The display became an articulation of stability in the changing socio-political environment that included the fear of a loss of identity. My informant suggested that since the display was constructed four years after the 1994 elections, in a period of uncertainty, the museum deliberately tried to avoid political topics and not to take a stand (Eva 2006-03-03).

In focusing on themes associated with childhood, the museum tried to depoliticise and culturally realign the religious role of Afrikaner heritage. My informant, however, did not see the child as apolitical and admitted a political dimension (Eva 2006-03-03). After 1994 Afrikaner identity was experienced as threatened on many levels, as it represented the previous regime. The representation of children in the display functioned as a symbol of vulnerability, unthreatening and seemingly apolitical, and materialised the vulnerability in which Afrikaner identity found itself in the post-1994 political climate. Through the representation of children the history of the Great Trek, its struggle, traditions and religious belonging could be partly depoliticised. Thus the museum was able to build on the narrative of Voortrekker history but apply it to new constitutional rights. Since in the late 1990s the image of the struggle of Voortrekkers and Boers against British imperialism was aligned with the black struggle paradigm. The struggle paradigm produced a common understanding among Afrikaners and Africans as to why Afrikaner heritage was protected post-1994.

For the centenary of the Anglo-Boer war (1999), both the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museums (VM) mounted displays to commemorate the war. The war can be regarded as contested, since it commemorated the birth of a racialised South Africa. It had been portrayed as a White man's war of importance to English-speakers, but assumed a significant role in

Afrikaner nationalism, highlighting heroism and sufferings, especially in relation to the concentration camps (Giliomee 2003: 432). The Natal Museum displayed in the 1980s military paraphernalia. In 2007 the Msunduzi Museum displayed in the Oldest House pictures of suffering in the refugee/concentration camps. These represent two completely different manifestations of the war and connect two different aspects of struggle for land and independence.

In 1999 there was a great need to include the history of other groups when commemorating the war. The Natal Museum focused on San and Indian participation in the war, whereas the Msunduzi Museum (VM) had an African and female focus. Lionel Mtshali¹⁶⁵ stated at the opening of the display at the Msunduzi Museum (VM) to *The Natal Witness* (1998-10-13) that: 'We view this exhibition with a great mixture of feelings. We deplore the pain and suffering as well as the greed and power behind the war'. He also stated that different people were entitled to their own history and that:

...one of the cardinal sins of demagogues and dictators is that they rewrite history to produce new official versions. They define history for others. This is what apartheid did, and we must never do it again (*The Natal Witness* 1998-10-13).

In Mtshali's statement the discrepancy between agents and structures as experienced in policy documents and acts is evident. The *White Paper* (1996) emphasised the correction and rewriting of history. Mtshali, however, rejected this in his speech. Transformation was ambiguous, the agenda consisted of correcting and criticising the past dispensation, and the process did not recognise that they were addressing and reshaping history in much the same way as had been done in the past. Transformation in this light was an ideological process with little practical framework, but with strong ideological goals.

Both the Natal Museum and the Msunduzi Museum (VM) set out to rewrite the images of war. In the Natal Museum the San participation and their reaction to the war was the main focus. During the war some San lived in the Drakensberg, but had to flee to the Northern Transvaal¹⁶⁶ where they worked for Boer farmers whom they helped during the war. My informant deliberately chose this perspective because he did not want to foreground the

¹⁶⁵ In his role as a mayor of Pietermaritzburg.

¹⁶⁶ Today the province of Mpumalanga.

awaited politically correct African perspective¹⁶⁷ (Gustav 2006-11-07). The African perspective of the war was expected as a contraposition to the nationalistic role the war had played in anglophile and Afrikaner nationalism. In this display a protest against dichotomisation of groups unfolded. It did not show conflict between the groups, but multiculturalism and unexpected collaboration, and my informant Gustav (2006-11-07) wanted to show that relationship in the past was more dynamic than previously depicted.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) produced a politically coherent version and focused on aspects such as African participation, women and everyday life.¹⁶⁸ Pols stated that this display would be the only one of its kind since the smaller museum only depicts aspects of the war (letter from Pols 1999-02-17). The display was described as being the most comprehensive display of photographic material of the war ever assembled in KwaZulu-Natal (*The Natal Witness* 1998-10-13). The museum thought it reflected its change of direction and determination to enhance its representivity as a more inclusive cultural history museum (VMAR 1998/1999). While these changes were taking place, there was, however, still a discrepancy between the institution and the staff-members who experienced the change differently.

One of my informants stated that at this time Transformation in the museum was proceeding slowly and was a question of 'window-dressing', as the museum needed to be perceived as engaged in Transformation (Margareta 2006-11-10). The display *Birth of Democracy* emerged out of a need to address Transformation and change political identity, but not without controversy. A teacher approached my informant and proposed the idea of a display about democracy. It had become part of the formal syllabus in the curriculum and the teacher needed help with it. The mounting of the display was met with objections from other staff-members, the management and Board of Trustees. They articulated the reaction as a charge that the curator was 'bringing the ANC into the museum' (Margareta 2006-11-10). Another informant agreed with how difficult it was to change the minds of the Board of Trustees (Francis 2006-11-18).

¹⁶⁷ The San are not classified as African but as indigenous people and have throughout history been subjugated by all races.

¹⁶⁸ The display consisted of photographs and memorabilia and a three-dimensional display of stretcher-bearers and nurses (Von Klemperer 1998-10-12).

Conflict surrounding the display reflected some agents' political positions as opposing those of the ANC. It also showed the complex situation that heritage and museums found themselves in and how important it was not to reflect these conflicting views outside the museum. As a national museum they had to act according to ideals like the one articulated by Nelson Mandela:

When our museums and monuments preserve the whole of our diverse heritage, when they are inviting to the public and interact with the changes all around them, then they will strengthen our attachment to human rights, mutual respect and democracy, and help prevent these ever again being violated (Mandela in Mpumlwana et al 2002:245).

If the museum could have complied with these directives, then it would not have survived as an institution, but since the history of the struggle was seen as conflicting with the agents' idea about the identity of the museum it was not a welcome change. History that conflicted with the staff-members' views had to be included in the museum, despite their opinions.

After 18 months my informant was granted funding for the project, but the staff-members of the museum approached her and said that she was 'selling the museum out' and aligning with Africans (Margareta 2006-10-11). So negotiation for space unfolds as an ideological conflict in a post-apartheid environment where reconciliation was supposed to be promoted. A display like this exemplifies how sensitive presentation and representation of cultural heritage was. It was therefore easier, as shown before, for the Msunduzi Museum (VM) to follow the government-stipulated directives rather than to make suggestions about changes themselves. If the government suggested change, then they were obligated, but if the staff-members suggested it then they had to confront their peers.

Displays about democracy form an important political space in the museum. They manifest the formation of a multicultural state, the end of White dominance and inequality, and are specified in the transformation budget as something for which DAC grants funding. Apartheid and democracy were experienced by all South Africans in different ways. Democracy as a theme was a way to build a common cultural heritage that everyone could associate with. It is therefore supposed to function as a reconciliation and nation-building experience. Ben Ngubane (2002) suggested that the painful aspects of the past in South Africa could not be swept under the carpet, but rather celebrated and understood in their historical context,

thereby helping to develop a creative response to South Africa's past and promote the process of healing.

The display *Birth of Democracy* still exists in the Msunduzi Museum, but has been reshaped several times. Initially the display focused on details and information, but today it focuses on pictures and memorabilia – a shift from presenting information to presenting heritage. The display now affirms values deep-rooted in the BCM and African Renaissance. Maphai (1994: 127) suggest that BCM focused on Africans as active agents engendering a greater self-worth. Dlamuka (2000: 6) writes that the display showed that Africans were not mere victims of colonial and apartheid domination but were rather depicted as part of broader socio-political negotiations and contestations. In displays about democracy, Africans received an empowered role and an active voice in the historical continuum, giving them a cultural identity. To Biko (2004: 44-50) modern African 'culture' was a culture of defiance emanating from a common experience of oppression. This idea was fundamental to Transformation that became more visible after 2000. The intense focus on struggle material was most likely a result of the shift from Mandela's rainbow nation to Mbeki's African approach and of the ANC assuming power over a DACST previously dominated by the IFP.

7.6 Towards the present

In 2000 the Msunduzi Museum (VM) became more multicultural and the *Zulu heritage display*, the *Redisplay of the Voortrekker exhibition* and an *HIV/AIDS display*¹⁶⁹ were curated (letter from Pals 2000-08-02, letter from Pals 2000-07-27). At the glass verandas of the museum facing the busy Langalibalele Street, the museum tried to convey the HIV/AIDS message to the public. It was intended to attract and educate people who normally would not visit to the museum (letter from Pals 2000-08-02).¹⁷⁰ I regard the museum at this time as having officially initiated Transformation according to government demands, as visualised in its changing display activities, but not in its collection activities. In 2002 the museum was reopened as a transformed museum, as a transformed space.

¹⁶⁹ KwaZulu-Natal has the highest infection rate of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Most affected are African South Africans.

¹⁷⁰ The Natal Museum addresses similar questions with the community window that features information on different NGO's and was opened to the public in 2000. The purpose of this display was to enable a space for the NGO's to create awareness of their work and the service they provide (Olifant 2001).

Castells (1983: 311), Foucault (1984: 246, 252) and Pred (1990: 11-12) suggest that space is fundamental to social relations, spatial distribution and the exercise of power; they cannot be separated and must be understood through each other. The shift in power from apartheid to democracy articulated that past-time displays were ideological misappropriations of heritage and a need for correction was emphasised. The process was ambiguous and did not necessarily include a transition from previous presentation of heritage. However, since displays were staged under a new political dispensation they were perceived as transformed when in reality they had not changed.

Until now I have mainly addressed representation of African and White heritage expressions in displays, because very little effort has been made to reflect Indian and Coloured heritage in the province. Since Africans were always represented in displays and collections, albeit as the other, they formed an active component of the Natal Museum's history. Indians and Coloureds, on the other hand, were invisible in the museum and were in this sense the true other of both the apartheid period and of Transformation. In 1990 the first temporal Indian display featuring *Indian Hindu bronze* and *Ivory carving* and *Indian labour* was curated in the Natal Museum (NMAR 1990/1991). In the late 1990s the Msunduzi Museum (VM) started to formulate an interest in the Indian community and engaged in a research project to encourage the Indian community to donate objects. They also involved the public in some of the temporal displays such as a Hindu and Muslim wedding and Ramadan display (MEVM 1997-09-26, MEVM 1997-01-16).

In retrospect the Natal Museum's Indian display *Threads in Time* formed an important part of the museum's Transformation. It started as a community project, focusing on women and self-representation and foregrounding a previously excluded group in the museum. The project was initiated by my informant Sahra (2006-03-21), who visited the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1995. She was asked to participate in a project that focused on Indian women away from India and their perception of themselves as Asian but also as citizens, e.g., of South Africa. The project focused on producing an embroidered panel for a tent: 'Shamiana, the Mughal Tent' that would contain their story and be displayed in London. My informants Sahra (2006-03-21) and Ada (2006-03-21) gathered a group of Indian women from mixed social and religious backgrounds who worked together for eight months on the project.

The project dealt with women's identity as Indians in South Africa, but when my informants asked them how they regarded themselves they answered that they were 'black'. The Indian women identified themselves as black due to the South African political dichotomisation of White and black. It was a distinction forced on them by apartheid which the women assumed both as an identity and as political identification. My informants Sahra (2006-03-21) and Ada (2006-03-21) tried to convince them that 'they were not black' but Indian and urged them to investigate what this entailed. In retrospect one of the Indian women participating in the group said: 'We discovered that almost all of us had been affected by the group area removals, which helped bring a strong sense of solidarity' and that it was 'necessary to explore the whole question of our identity, historically and in the present, to discover a new sense of ourselves as Indian women and South Africans' (*The Witness* 2007-09-06).

The women embroidered a panel showing the history of the Indian community, the ship SS Truro that brought the first indentured labourers to South Africa, the life of the early settlers, and the importance of education, music, religion and political hardship (Von Klemperer 1997a,b). After the display in London the panel returned to Pietermaritzburg and my informants initiated a project of an Indian display to give the Indian groups that visited the museum something to relate to (Von Klemperer 1999a, b). My informants Sahra (2006-03-21) and Ada (2006-03-21) contacted the same group that together researched and curated a display. One woman said in retrospect that 'we became very excited at the idea that at last there was some interest being shown in Indian culture by the formerly all-white museums of Pietermaritzburg' (*The Witness* 2007-09-06).

The women had full control over representation, yet the display themes centred on a male-dominated representation of their history. One would perhaps have expected a female-focused history, as the women were allowed to produce a display about themselves, but it is not uncommon that women foreground and highlight the male-dominated culture. Sahra (2006-03-21) explained that they tried to implement a female perspective, but the women were not interested. They seemed to be unable to reflect critically on the male-dominated culture in which they were situated. Historical perspectives do not necessarily change when communities themselves present history. Nevertheless this has been foregrounded as Transformation. Communities presenting their own history are embedded in a mainstream historical perspective which might not even be more representative than a curator's representation of history. Yet one of the women said in retrospect that it made them

‘[discover] and [understand] new aspects of ourselves and our lives’ (*The Witness* 2007-09-06).

Despite the representation in the display, it was an important part of Transformation. It dealt with women, an aspect otherwise neglected in Transformation, though it was emphasised by the government. The display was connected to the local community and local interests that were stipulated by the RDP (ANC 1994) to produce a sense of ownership. Ownership was part of Transformation terminology and assistant director Judith Masters (2000-02-23) said in a speech at the opening that this was one of the most exciting acts of ownership she could imagine and that it was an extremely important part of Transformation.

The *Threads in Time* display was the Natal Museum’s first community-driven project, and was meant to be a temporary display but turned into a permanent one. Educational officer Iris Bornman said in a speech at the opening that the display was an ‘ideal opportunity to redress the past’, that it was ‘so healing to our community’ as well as ‘empowering and affirming’ (Bornman 2000-02-23). The members of the group also spoke about the empowerment that emerged from the project (*The Natal Witness* 2000-02-03). In retrospect one of the women said: ‘This rare opportunity to reflect on our roots and our vision of ourselves has greatly reinforced our self-esteem and identity, both as Indian women and as post-apartheid South Africans’ (*The Witness* 2007-09-06).

The project brought the Indian community closer to the museum because the display promoted a sense of pride in community achievements. Bornman wrote in a report that ‘the sense of belonging to the new South African society with its divergent cultures was a rewarding discovery’ (Bornman 2000). A member of the group said that they had come to terms with the past and the present and faced the future with confidence (Supersad 2000-02-23). The display did not only have meaning in the relationship between the museum and the Indian community, but also among Indians themselves. Supersad (2000-02-23) noted that it created ‘a bridge building exercise within the Indian community between various cultural and religious groups and also discovering their roots as the group asked themselves the question who they were’.

The museum became part of Indian self-exploration which was an important historical revitalization of post-1994 South Africa. The museum created an Indian space in the museum,

but not without controversy. Other staff-members were not interested and the display was therefore not funded. This led to the Indian community and other staff-members sponsoring the display (Ada 2006-03-21, Sahra 2006-03-21). The museum Transformation therefore involves the agents' interest in the project and is far from following a unified standard. Transformation has paid little interest to Indian and especially Coloured heritage and has focused mostly on African representations and is therefore not completely inclusive. So the museum produced political spaces rather than democratic spaces.

The curator's ethnicity has been emphasised as important to Transformation and there has been a call for self-representation which triggers a sense of empowerment and authenticity. Consequently a White person representing African, Indian and Coloured history has been seen as inadequate. An example of this was the *Traditional Zulu Dress* (2001)¹⁷¹ display in the Natal Museum's *History Hall* (NMAR 2000/2001, 2004/2005). The *Traditional Zulu Dress* display was an addition to the display of White clothing-history curated in the 1980s. The display was dismantled, resulting in the *Traditional Zulu Dress* display being out of context. The display focused on traditional dress from rural contexts and showed a conventional view of Zulu men and women. My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) said that he opposed this display because it showed an image of the Zulu frozen in time. He regarded the display as stereotyped and said that similar ones could be seen throughout South Africa. This display was put up in a transformed museum climate by Zulu staff-members and was therefore regarded as a transformed display. Ironically it manifests and reinforces traditional images and ideas that were produced during the Victorian and apartheid period by Whites, something that the Natal Museum had tried to eliminate since the 1980s. Transformation in this context meant, ironically, that a self-representation constructed in democracy became similar to apartheid representations.

Other changes in the *History Hall* in the Natal Museum were a photographic display of transport, African urban history and African artwork (NMAR 2000/2001, 2004/2005). These displays continued the decolonisation of White spaces in the museum. The displays acknowledged African and to some extent Indian, but not Coloured, heritage. Transformation only addressed and en-raced White spaces, interpreted as representing White domination. Other spaces were left untouched and were not en-raced. The space unfolded according to the

¹⁷¹ Dismantled in late 2007.

prevailing socio-political climate and reflected ideas associated with the Transformation agenda. African spaces were not regarded as needing to become multicultural, because they suggested power and domination as White spaces did. For instance, the *African Art* display, an exclusive African space, was not made inclusive as was demanded of the *History Hall*. This suggests that Transformation was far from coherent and that its main objective was to break with the White norm.

There was a discrepancy between Transformation ideals and the outcome of the displays. Transformation encouraged 'traditional' biases, but not if it was mediated by Whites. It opposed a view of a timeless society, but not if mediated by Africans. It encouraged multicultural perception and inclusivity, but only if it initiated a break with White spaces. Displays produced during Transformation were therefore dependent on who curated them rather than on what was produced. The time of curation also mattered if it was regarded as Transformation. It is evident that ideas of heritage continued to exist, although apartheid had fallen, and that these ideas were upheld not only by Whites.

Traditionalism was an important aspect during Transformation and had political implications associated with African nationalism. The display *Indigenous Classification* in the Natal Museum embodied Transformation ideals and dealt with the concept of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). IKS stemmed ideologically from the African Renaissance and its primary goal was to investigate traditional cultures. Snail (1993: 294) believed that Africans must build their own value system and not be defined by others. Biko (2004: 51) articulated that when the colonial culture mixed with the African culture it left behind a 'bastardised' culture that could only function according to the pace of the dominant (colonial) culture. Transformation suggests that by rejecting eurocentric knowledge systems, Africans could through IKS reject what was oppressing them.

Tondi (2005: 121-123) argued that IKS provided Africans with intellectual raw material for the task of reconstructing African societies along African lines. IKS, however, seldom acknowledged the dynamic process between African cultures and other continents. This approach only allowed cultures to be viewed as immaculate and not as multicultural. Nationalists usually want to emphasise the uniqueness of culture to position it against something other – in this case eurocentric knowledge systems. In this sense the IKS did not differ from Afrikaner nationalism's self-proclaimed uniqueness, and Transformation used

similar nation-building aspects. It was quite clear the IKS was politically directed towards African cultures, although Neluvhalani (2005: 73) argues that it was not opposing European classification systems and was not only about African culture.

The display *Indigenous Classification* was the curators' way to rebalance the European and African perception of nature and a way to bridge the natural and cultural history displays in the Natal Museum (Gustav 2006-11-07). Küsel (1997)¹⁷² wrote that Africans and Whites had different concepts of culture. Whites made a division between nature and culture, whereas Africans saw nature itself as culture. My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) curated the display on this assumption, but at the same time deconstructed it. He wanted to show different ways of classifying nature. The *Indigenous Classification* display addressed the eurocentrism in the museum and acknowledged an alternative classification of the world. Ntsoane (2002: 2-4) argued that IKS could assist in redressing the imbalances imposed by colonialism, deconstruct fixed boundaries between objects and groups and open them to become more inclusive.

The Natal Museum is foremost a research institution whose second concern was curation of displays and which triggered a more individual Transformation. The Msunduzi Museum is mainly a heritage institution that produces research for the purpose of displays and was more concerned with being in line with governmental policies. Since research in the Natal Museum is an ongoing process it is not as easily affected by political demands. The institution therefore showed a different perception of history and heritage based on governmental demands, institutional interest and agents' decisions. An example of this was *SOPHISA*, which was extended with two new displays, the *Stories of Human Origins* (2000) and a development of the *Drakensberg San Rock Art* (2001). The latter features an interactive and explanatory display presenting rock art as 'visual' (Solomon 2001). My informant Gustav (2006-11-07) argued that the curator wanted subtly to challenge and deconstruct the dominant discourse of rock art as being mainly about shamanistic activities. This view is represented by leading South African rock art archaeologist JD Lewis-Williams. The display was therefore a direct reflection of the curator's academic writing (compare Solomon (1997)), challenging the dominant archaeological discourse and interpretation of rock art.

¹⁷² SAMA chairperson of that year.

Differently to JD Lewis-Williams, the curator suggested that rock art represented San mythology and not shamanistic activities (Solomon 1997, Von Klemperer 1999c). The display was therefore part of a reinterpretation of history and a break with established academic traditions. Most representations of San people relied on cultural stereotypes, but in the display and the display proposal there were very few traces of what Dowson (1995: 51), Robins (2000: 61-63) and Wanless (2001: 21) describe as San stereotypes – images of San people as childlike and as natural trackers. On the contrary the original display proposal (Mazel 1989b) wanted to show rock art as traces of colonial resistance, and the outcome of the display had a section about this. It was a conscious historical reference intended to deconstruct the colonial legacy and the racial division of the former South Africa. The Natal Museum therefore tried to position the San beyond their role as hunter-gatherers and shamans and acknowledged their role in a political and historical context that previously had not been acknowledged in museum displays. The outcome of the display could be seen as a response to Dowson and Lewis-Williams' (1993: 58) critique of museums for positioning rock art beyond the controversies of society.

At present rock art has become highly politicised. Moodley (2006: 86) states that 'rock art has been a political tool exploited to bolster the pride and morale of our nation.' She refers to the South African coat of arms unveiled in 2000 where the San figures, according to Mbeki, demonstrate Transformation and humanity (Mbeki 2000 in Moodley 2006). San imagery was chosen by the government as a symbol for a heritage that united all South Africans (Smith, Lewis-Williams, Blundell, Chippindale 2000: 467-468). The San are at present seen as the ultimate result of the inhumanity that has prevailed in South Africa. Mbeki describes them as 'they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their life in the struggle to defend our freedom and independence and they who, as a people, perished in the result' (Mbeki 1996). The San people in Mbeki's speech represent a non-racial South Africa and the struggle against injustice and an unidentified opponent. From an archaeological context one could interpret the perpetrator as being both African and White, but it is unclear whether this was Mbeki's intention. It is interesting to highlight that the San exhibition was expanded at the same time as the coat of arms was unveiled; it is no coincidence that the interest of museums in rock art and San culture grew from this time on.

Part of a similar visualisation of a multicultural South Africa was the display *Stories of Human Origins*, a new introduction to *SOPHISA* on human evolution (Origins display text, Coan 2000-10-21). The curator wanted to show different ways in which people explain why they are on earth and he emphasised that the ways were all ‘stories’ (Thomas 2005-10-02, Coan 2000-10-21). The main focus was human development using evolution theory. My research has shown that there were a number of Christian staff-members in the Natal Museum who rejected the idea of evolution theory, because it conflicted with the Christian faith, resulting in a degree of friction in the museum. To tone down the evolution perspective the curator added aspects of Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Zulu religion, but with a directed precaution from the museum council (Thomas 2005-10-02). The curator said in an interview with *The Natal Witness*:

This display explicitly acknowledges the role of belief in our understanding of the world ... it is not presenting the various origin stories as alternatives. It’s not even trying to oppose theological explanation with those from the world of science – these two types of explanations serve different purposes ... Religious origin stories place us on earth in a context in which we must seek salvation or live a moral life, while science is investigating our origins in an effort to understand the details of human evolution. I would like to see people visiting the display acknowledging not just the belief system they belong to but reading the other stories and finding some common ground – as well as acknowledging the difference – while also accepting the validity of the other stories in the context of belief. I’d like to think the display might contribute towards a greater tolerance of others and a breakdown of fundamentalism (Coan 2000-10-21).

The curator did not want to oppose one explanation with another and hoped that the visitor would leave the display with an appreciation of all belief systems (Origins display text). The curator’s presentation of history and his intentions exemplify the *SOPHISA* exhibition. Nation-building aspects and messages were subtly incorporated into the text, availing visitors of the opportunity to create their own opinions, an approach rather different from the majority of Transformation displays that steered the visitors’ experience in a certain direction. Thus the Natal Museum showed a more independent approach to the government demands of Transformation.

The *SOPHISA* exhibition continued with the *Gold, Spices and Portuguese Trade* display (2005) (NMAR 2004/2005), followed by the *Towns and Trade* display (2006). These displays were the first in the *SOPHISA* exhibition that showed interaction between different groups. Earlier displays had presented history and ‘cultural groups’ as separate and diverse without traces of interaction. The interaction and contacts between different cultures can be seen as a major departure from previous ways of displaying history.

The *Towns and Trades* (2006) dealt with the origin and development of the Zimbabwean cultures and Swahili towns relation to and trade with South African cultures¹⁷³ (Our Dynamic Past: A southern African Story). This display follows Huffman's (1989, 1996, 2000, 2005) archaeological research, centred on Great Zimbabwe's and Mapungubwe's sacred leadership and architectural symbolism. It traces linguistic and cultural groups through ceramic patterns. The display was also influenced by the archaeological research of Calabrese (2005) and Van Doornum (2005) on identity and class and social and political ideology in the Shashe-Limpopo region. The Natal Museum tried in this display to present progressive archaeological research to educate the visitor about recent archaeological theories.

The display proposal described this part of history as vital, because aspects of development in South African history and African state formation were poorly known by the general public (Our Dynamic Past: a southern African Story). This display deconstructed official historical narratives produced during apartheid, presented a new, elaborated version and contributed to the construction of a more extensive knowledge of South African history. In one way the display furthered African nationalism; Maggs (1993) describes how Great Zimbabwe, in the 1960s and 1970s, became a symbol for 'black liberation' and Meyer (2000) argues that currently in political debates Mapungubwe is referred to as a prominent heritage used to bolster the political vision of the African Renaissance. The Natal Museum, however aimed to contextualise Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe in a larger historical and socio-political context, to deconstruct their use in nationalistic expressions and to separate the past from the present.

Transformation is characteristic of a search for a common identity of which this part of *SOPHISA* showed traces. The original display proposals wanted to define the present through past cultural identities, but this theme was deliberately avoided in the final display. A balance between the proposal and the final product was found focusing on pottery styles that identified language groups and highlighted the dynamism of pottery styles and cultures. Through this the African Renaissance was challenged by showing that African cultures were not untainted by outside influences, but changed and evolved through contact with other

¹⁷³ About 900 AD the chiefdom named Shroda by archaeologists initiated relations with the Swahili, controlling metal exports to the coast. By AD 1220 Mapungubwe, the largest urban settlement of the day, had created social strata and sacred leadership for the first time in South Africa. Specialised craft now emerged and weaving became established (Our Dynamic Past: a southern African Story).

groups within and beyond Africa. The displays showed that what connected South Africans were the ideas about the land they inhabited. They showed that language, cultural expression and people were dynamic and changed according to space and time.

The *Gold, Spices and Portuguese Trade* (2005) display centred on the global expansion of the 1500s. The display proposal describes the connections with Europe as civil war, divide and rule policies and undermining of economies (Our Dynamic Past: A southern African Story). The display focused on the African response to Portuguese expansion – and not the other way round – as displayed in the *Portuguese Age of Discovery*. It showed African trade and social systems and the role Africans and Portuguese played in this. My informant Thomas (2005-10-02) deliberately downplayed the dominant European role and presented the Portuguese as ignorant and unaware of existing trade with the diverse and sophisticated African societies they interacted with. He wanted to show well established African societies that had much to offer, which the Europeans discovered and used in their trade.

The display was a deliberate critique of European history-writing and Thomas used this perspective as a strategy to reposition Africa and challenge the perceived superiority of Europe. This was a way to create a South African archaeological discourse otherwise trapped in a eurocentric narrative. When he challenged the idea of European imperialism and domination Thomas also challenged the African Renaissance. Showing an empowered African social system downplayed the idea of the Portuguese as crippling African societies. It also deconstructed the concept of ‘traditional’ immaculate African cultures and instead brought in the aspect of an admixture of African and Asian cultures. Thus the curator introduced globalisation and dynamic cultural expression.¹⁷⁴ Presenting African contacts with the Arab world, Thomas (2005-10-02) showed that Africans were trading in slaves before the Europeans arrived. This deconstructed post-colonial and BCM theories of the African diaspora as the sole result of White domination. Moreover, it indirectly asked the central question – what are African cultures? The display did not aim at giving answers, but hoped that the visitor would contemplate the possible answers. The display related the past to the present by aspects used in the present: aspects such Zulu and Nguni words, herbs, maize and divide-and-conquer rule. The display highlighted characteristics of Transformation that aimed at exploring and introducing new aspects of history.

¹⁷⁴ Foregrounding, e.g., maize in traditional African cooking as introduced by the Portuguese.

At the same time as the Natal Museum engaged in an active criticism of history and nationalism in *SOPHISA*, the *Sounds of Africa* constructed a direct response to Transformation. The *Sounds of Africa* embodied three Transformative aspects; it focused on participation, *amasiko* and traditional African culture. It was one of the government's main objectives for Transformation to deconstruct the meaning narrated by museum officials during colonial and apartheid times and to introduce people's narratives and perception of cultures. This display drew on the concept that Oruka (2002: 61) described as African people's contribution to culture and civilisation, constituted by the sensibilities of rhythm, dance and song. I suggest that this concept stereotyped African culture and locked it into a eurocentric perception without acknowledging that the whole concept of *amasiko* drew on the European notion that Africans were more connected to oral culture and music than Whites. Either this was a deliberate reaction to reclaim and deconstruct stereotypes of African cultures in eurocentric narratives, or it was an effort to create an African heritage out of what was already known about Africans.

The Natal Museum's keyword for the *Sounds of Africa* was 'edu-tainment',¹⁷⁵ – the introduction of multimedia techniques to attract people's interest (*The Natal Witness* 2005-10-22, NMAR 2004/2005, Jasmine 2005-10-11). Transformation used new display techniques to accentuate change. Visitors' interaction with the displays was presumed to be active and was articulated as not being a static display which was therefore experienced as Transformation. Putnam (1996: 36) suggests that allowing people to touch objects avoided the physical barrier between objects and visitors and was different from when vetrines are used. My informants Jasmine (2005-10-26) and Steph (2006-04-04) explained that their perception of an African display was where objects could be touched and interacted with. Director Maphasa (2004) suggested that displays not behind glass create a sense of ownership over the place. My informant positioned interactive displays as transformative because they were believed to be different from past displays - more democratic and open to new visitors.

Transformation entailed 'Africanising' displays and reclassifying ethnographic objects. They changed from being eurocentrically classified to being classified according to Transformation. The artefact was taken out of its eurocentric frame and introduced into what became an

¹⁷⁵ A mixture of the words educational and entertainment.

Africanised space. Drawing on the ideas of Oruka (2002) and *amasiko* the process intended to create participation, rhythm and sound and be different from the 'look but not touch' approach in the traditional museum. This meant changing the medium through which information and objects were conveyed. It did not, however, intend to question stereotypes of African cultures, but to celebrate the culture in a pan-African perception. My informant told me that the *Sounds of Africa* was about seeing, hearing, playing and understanding (Bill 2006-04-18). This is not specific to Transformation but can be seen in a global perspective and is well connected to new museology. Drawing on Tolia-Kelly (2003: 315) I suggest that the visual organisation of material culture showed new political ideas in new spaces of belonging. In Transformation, old display techniques became political through cultural affiliation. New political spaces were now proposed to unfold in the museum as reclassified objects changed the message through the medium of presentation. This display was no different from previous displays, but a distinction lies in its articulation as part of Transformation.

Interactive displays and *amasiko* aim at excising control. The aim is to reclaim and transfer the right and power of interpretation of material culture from the (former) White institutions to the communities from which the material was collected. Music in the 'Sounds of Africa' could through *amasiko* be controlled and reproduced by all members of society. It was about creating oral history together and connecting the previous White space to a democratic space. My informant Bill (2006-04-18) explained that the display aimed to show history and development of traditional, not modern, African music. He acknowledged the difficulties positioning the difference between traditional and modern music and compared it to the definitions and classification of art and craft. My informant showed ambivalence to the concept 'traditional culture' and 'African' and how ambiguously Transformation materialised in displays. The Natal Museum tried to balance the materialisation of Transformation and its strong nationalistic motives with the scientific, more complex view of culture. Therefore the displays articulated the discrepancy within the institution itself and its relationship to the government. Displays like the *Sounds of Africa* seemed to be more transformed than, e.g., the *SOPHISA* but that was because the *Sounds of Africa* strictly followed government policies that also provided more funding.

In 2006 the Msunduzi museum opened two exhibitions: *A River runs through it...Mzunduzi* and the (new) *Birth of Democracy*.¹⁷⁶ The displays dealt with an inclusive history of Pietermaritzburg, reflecting all 'cultural groups'.¹⁷⁷ The displays were funded by the transformation budget through which it became possible to produce displays not feasible in the past. One of my informants said that this was why the museum could only recently produce permanent displays (letter from Anna 2006-10-09). The museums' economic struggle during apartheid is seldom acknowledged in museological writing. Even if there was a wish to change, museums struggled to do so because of financial constraints. Transformation agendas are therefore directly manifested in the museum through the transformation budget. This required representation of multiculturalism, struggle material and *amasiko* and display appealing to a diverse audience (transformation budget framework and guidelines 2005). The transformation budget specified explicitly what kinds of displays were desired in the museum. This suggested a standardized form and left little space for regional or museum-specific expressions.

The staff-members and Board of Trustees of the Msunduzi Museum (VM) decided on the themes for displays, since the board was responsible for the general direction of the museum (Gert 2006-04-28). Since the Board of Trustees represent DAC, they can be regarded as a symbolical direct link between displays and the government. The displays were meant to represent an inclusive history in Pietermaritzburg. My informants Gert (2006-04-28) and Steph (2006-04-04) articulated that they wanted to create a sense of pride in Pietermaritzburg by connecting the museum to the community and focusing on local history from prehistoric times to the present. Their statement was ideologically in line with the RDP that focused on local driven projects.

¹⁷⁶ The displays, when opened to the public, were still developing and at my writing (2008) were incomplete. The staff-members held that they would continue to develop and add to the displays to enhance information and renew the museum. Several new sections were completed after I finished my fieldwork in the museum.

¹⁷⁷ The museum has linked their educational work to the display, something typical of this museum after Transformation and making it different from the Natal Museum. The Msunduzi Museum's approach can be perceived as holistic. Similar upcoming projects are the herb garden, interlinked with the school curricula and outreach projects. Concerning the history of Pietermaritzburg, they have started a five-year project focusing on oral history and living culture in conjunction with the school syllabus and to counter the lack of knowledge of contemporary history of the local townships. The museum will in 2010 together with the students write a play (Margareta 2006-10-11).

*A river runs through it...Msunduzi*¹⁷⁸ (2006) was a semi-linear display, parts of which used linear time and other parts snapshots of different themes. The underlying theme was conflict and resolution in past and present KwaZulu-Natal. At one end of the display hall a full-sized shack was constructed with the interior of a home, in which violent pictures from the conflicts in KwaZulu-Natal were projected on a piece of cloth accompanied by African music. According to my informant Steph (2006-04-04), this part of the display portrayed the double displacement, during the internecine war, of 'black' people fleeing the townships and the countryside but not being welcome in the town. This version of a home was quite different from the Zulu traditional homestead outside the museum that is more in line with the symbols of home that Inkatha promoted. The shack makes a poignant reference to the reality of political violence and poverty.

According to my informant the vertical pillars, on which different multicultural themes (architecture, transport, religion etc) were shown, represented 'upliftment' and were meant to juxtapose the feeling of double displacement (Steph 2006-04-04). The museum aimed to present history from an African, Indian, Coloured and White perspective. Each group was allocated a space¹⁷⁹ and the displayed themes represented something from each group. The themes drew on aspects that functioned as identity-markers during apartheid and which the museum continued to use to build a multicultural heritage. For Indian, African and Afrikaner identities religious faith played a vast role and was also, according to Ebr.-Vally (2001: 179), how Indian groups remembered land and ancestor. Architecture and transport were other themes that were not incorporated by coincidence; they differentiated heritage, especially for Afrikaners where the oxwagon marked out Afrikaner identity. Drawing on Shields (1991: 40) and Foucault (1979: 137-143), I suggest that display was perceived according to coding, values and relations. When visitors enter the display, power is rearranged and allocates an experience of space to each visitor. They perceive the museum as being multicultural because space has been allocated to them for this purpose.

¹⁷⁸ I have chosen to analyse this display in terms of multiculturalism, reconciliation and inclusivity. These aspects are at present important to the museum since they strive to be a fully inclusive museum addressing all 'cultural groups' in the community.

¹⁷⁹ The 'cultural groups' were inclusively represented in each theme. They were also allocated a room or a section on the mezzanine floor of the display which dealt with each group's history and heritage.

The Msunduzi Museum used entrenched apartheid classification of the social-political structures to create an image of multiculturalism; this can be reflected against what Ben Ngubane said in a speech in 2002:

Multiple identities and perspectives need to be brought together to form a wider understanding of our national identity. We need, as a nation, to go beyond a mere assembly of representations of diverse legacies ... to explore a more panoramic, holistic, non-racial commitment to Africa and South Africa.

Both Ngubane's speech and the display aimed to create a common loyalty – a 'hyper-reality' of what South Africa wants to become. The display wants to explore South Africa's diverse heritage, a construction of apartheid classification, and make it democratic, diverse, multicultural, non-racial and inclusive. The museum makes it look real and it is therefore perceived as real. This showed a past that people wanted to forget and a multicultural future that they wanted to embrace. These aspects were well articulated, e.g., in the *Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act 19 of 2002*. The act acknowledged South Africa's diverse heritage that in the past had been subject to division and inequality. It wished to heal and build a united South Africa through a common loyalty to the country.

The display addressed conflict and reconciliation, to bring unity into the present. It asked the question: Who burned down Mgungundlovu?¹⁸⁰ The question is politically charged since it draws on both Afrikaner and African nationalism. Due to this the museum deliberately altered a display text to avoid controversy. My informants stated that it was important for the museum not to take sides (Ntokoso 2006-04-28), and that it was central for the visitor to create an own opinion and that the institution should not dictate views (Sabelo 2006-04-21). Two other informants Steph (2006-04-04) and David (2006-04-24, 2006-04-04) held that it was also critical to remain neutral and politically correct. This shows how the museum experiences the sensitive situation of presentation of heritage in Transformation.

The display reclassified the Voortrekkers as 'Dutch farmers' because of the role Voortrekkers played during apartheid in political propaganda. A re-representation was needed to avoid political affiliations. Through reclassification the Voortrekker image lost its mythological value and assumed a different socio-political position. It can also be seen as a comment on the present socio-political environment where Afrikaners often choose to reconsider their identity

¹⁸⁰ A question referring to the Voortrekker-Zulu conflict. Was it the Zulus themselves or the Voortrekkers?

because, as my informant Marie (2006-11-03) explained, they ‘feel ashamed’ of their actions in the past. Then it can be considered as a response to the issue of ‘expropriating land’. Similar to the case in Zimbabwe, the South African government is currently engaged in land relocation where attempts to buy (White) commercial farmland and relocate it to disadvantaged (African) communities is being undertaken. If a farmer, however, can prove ownership of land before 1914¹⁸¹ then the land claimants have no legal claim to it. The reclassification of the Voortrekkers positioned Afrikaners as farmers before 1914. The display repositioned the Afrikaner issue of belonging, the diaspora and the right to land in a contemporary context.

White identities were explored in a new socio-political context during Transformation. Examples of this were the *Prince Imperial*¹⁸² exhibitions and the idea of incorporating a display of English heritage. For a former Afrikaner institution to incorporate facets of English heritage can be regarded as reconciliation and Transformation, considering the differences the groups acted out during apartheid. To balance heritage representations, White identities as former centres of heritage production were deconstructed. This makes the museum’s Transformation unique in that focus has been placed foremost on re-representation of African heritage. In its efforts to be inclusive, the museum engaged in a process of ‘shelving’, allowing a diversification and democratisation of space for all ‘cultural groups’.

Mazel and Wright (1991: 63) wrote that most museums during apartheid displayed the initial face of colonisation up until 1920 when ‘success’ was achieved. The transformed exhibition *A river runs through it...Msunduzi* shows a similar kind of nationalism building on concepts relating to success and development. In the exhibition history begins with prehistoric periods and continues up to democracy when success was achieved. Both aspects assume central roles in African nationalism. This reveals how displays functioned as a space where people could gather strength and inspiration to cope with the present.

Such a display was the *Birth of Democracy*, a new version of the old display with the same name. The display makes no reference to the prelude during colonialism but presents the struggle for freedom from 1948-1994. The display reads as a space where African nationalist

¹⁸¹ The date refers to the passing of the *Native Land Act of 1913* that forbade Africans to purchase and lease land outside the reserves and was the key to (White) commercial farming.

¹⁸² The display has existed in different versions in the museum and is an initiative by a visitor interested in French presence in South Africa.

ideology challenged Afrikaner nationalist ideology and revealed itself as a success-story where democracy overcame all obstacles. African and Afrikaner nationalist propaganda are similar. Both ideologies wanted to create a national myth based on struggle, suffering, the quest for land, an evil other and overcoming obstacles. The difference was that one was exclusive and the other strove to be inclusive. The *Birth of Democracy* was part of an effort to bring the diverse South African heritage into a common heritage. All South Africans experienced apartheid, but in different ways, and the experience is used as a unifying symbol.

Drawing on Hylland Eriksen (1993: 22, 1996: 56, 73-77, 1999: 48-49), this display presented the nation as a family with family metaphors like the father of the nation (Nelson Mandela) and through him a pride of achievement. According to Maré (1992: 63-64) and Marks (1989: 221), the Zulu king symbolised the head and the unity of the nation in Zulu nationalism. This is seen in the *River runs through it...Msunduzi* whereas in the *Birth of Democracy* it is represented through politicians like Mandela. Here it was not just an African symbol, but a symbol transcending race barriers that became a representation for a united multicultural South Africa. Afrikaner and African nationalistic expressions both created patriarch heroes in this display which was used, together with sport and art, to juxtapose democracy to apartheid in order to strengthen the family-related metaphors of the nation. South Africa's 'birth' as a democracy was created as a national myth with a moral message. To work as a myth they had to have meaning, connection and continuity with the present for visitors. Transformed displays have a political message that intends to change the impression of the nation. The *Birth of Democracy* created an institutionalisation of heritage and promoted stability in a changing society. Displays, regardless of whether they were produced during apartheid or under democracy, materialised stabilising ideals.

7.7 What was Transformation in displays?

In this chapter displays have been compared to socio-political structures and academic discourses in a long temporal sequence to investigate patterns of change to discuss Transformation. Displays are not closed systems, but are spatialised socio-political structures that materialise and compress space and time through human agency. This was visible in the change towards more democratic displays starting as early as the 1970s and continuing through the 1980s. Due to economic constraints, the efforts to try and democratise space were not visible until the late 1990s. In the 2000s the transformation budget gave economic support

for museums to change. Transformation does not entail a transition from ‘bad’ spaces to ‘good’ spaces, but the past is used as a rhetorical tool visualising what Transformation does not wish to be. Yet old stereotypes and classifications are still used to maintain society and democracy.

Both past and present displays created a self; and to create a self there has to be an other. The Natal Museum aimed to explain the other, predominantly African material culture. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) had a heritage approach where the other was part of a narrative about the Afrikaner self. Through these different methods the museums created anglophile and Afrikaner identities. Museums are trying to build a representation of the nation redressing the past, to protect cultural diversity, and to ensure representations from all ‘cultural groups’. This process of Transformation relies heavily on post-colonial, BCM and African Renaissance writing. It is abandoning a multicultural approach for an African (nationalist) approach.

During Transformation past displays were discussed as presenting White heritage. The Natal Museum, however, dismantled displays of White heritage in the early days to make room for African heritage in which they were more interested. In the 1970s this changed and the museum constructed the *History Hall* that celebrated anglophile heritage by drawing on the colonial urban experience of the 1870s. This coincided with the implementation of segregation laws and forced removals. At the same time the Msunduzi Museum (VM) displayed information about the Boer Republic, an Afrikaner version of a successful past. During the 1970s the two museums were reflecting the nation-building of a White-dominated state in two conflicting ways. They were not concerned with juxtaposing the self against the other but were developing a self through different historical narratives. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) experimented with different themes such as music and education, and showed traditional African heritage and political history in the first *Birth of Democracy*. The museum experienced inner conflicts during these negotiations. Natal Museum explored Transformation through already existing African themes in line with new museology and developed *African Art* and *Amandla* (1993) and *SOPHISA* that challenged apartheid narrative through archaeological research to empower an African pre-history.

New museology has criticised the use of evolution theory on the basis that it produces hierarchal prejudices. During Transformation, however, it was used in the *SOPHISA* to

challenge CNE and religious fundamentalism and to deconstruct assumptions of African culture and segregation. *Stories of Human Origins* (2000) and *Towns and Trades* (2006) showed a common heritage rather than diversity. *San hunter-gatherers 2000 years ago* (1994) and the *Drakensberg Cave* (1992) were directed at educating children and illiterates to understand history. The *SOPHISA* challenged normative, eurocentric and academic writing, e.g., *Drakensberg San Rock Art* (2001) and *Gold, Spices and Portuguese Trade* (2005). It also tried as far as possible to avoid African nationalism and even challenged it in *Towns and Trades* (2006). Displays are reflections of socio-political structures either in line or in discrepancy to it. They show how the museums understand and negotiate reconciliation, nation-building and Transformation and the transition from apartheid and its development to a multicultural approach with overarching African development.

The advocates of Transformation criticised the past displays for being static, Victorian and eurocentric. This is partly true, but is based on a general dislike for apartheid. The critique has not taken into consideration criticism in the *Du Toit Report* (1949) and in the *Niemand Report* (1975). Nor are the similarities between *MUSA* (1994) and *ACTAG* (1996) considered. The reports had vague definitions of displays and regarded them as object-based. During Transformation in line with new museology, displays were emphasised to mediate messages rather than to show objects. The government's explicit Transformation demands materialised *Sisonke* (1997) and the *Zulu Treasures Exhibition* (1997). Government ideas of Transformation were made possible in museums through the transformation budget that stressed *amasiko*, IKS and the struggle to unite the nation. This was similar to the *Du Toit Report's* (1949) efforts. Part of Transformation was the Msunduzi Museum's (VM) *Redisplays of the Great Trek* (1998), the *Education of the Voortrekker Child* (1998) and *Not only a white man's war* (1998). These showed renegotiation of Afrikaner identity in a post-1994 climate while retaining an anti-anglophile position and incorporating representations of Indians, Africans and women. The Anglo-Boer war display in the Natal Museum showed interaction and collaboration between San people and Boer farmers during the war. Transformation can in this perspective be regarded as a reinterpretation of a dominant narrative.

The Natal Museum started an interest in the Indian Community in the 1980s. In 1997 the community project *Threads in Time* was staged and included several Transformation ideals like previously disadvantaged communities, community involvement and female

participation. The eco-museum method propagated during Transformation does not necessarily produce a more holistic perception of history, but rather shows how communities use and develop a mainstream male-centred historical narrative. The *Traditional Zulu Dress* (2000) display shows similar features. Transformation therefore reveals a return to traditionalism and is concerned with who constructs displays rather than with the outcome.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) changed rapidly after 2000, coinciding with the employment of an African director and change of Board of Trustees, prompting new displays. Later the Transformation project *A river runs through it...Msunduzi* (2005) was opened and visualised objectives from the transformation budget and the RDP. It is a 'shelved' representation of heritage and ensures a democratic representation from prehistory to the present within a local context. The Natal Museum staged displays such as *Indigenous Classification* and the *Sounds of Africa* (2005) that focused on IKS, *amasiko* and visitor participation. Yet these transformed spaces do not question heritage but promote traditionalism. Transformation depends on human agency to negotiate and re-represent heritage in the institution and is a complex web of past and present socio-political structures, different kinds of nationalism, nation-building and reconciliation.

CHAPTER 8. LOST IN TRANSFORMATION – A CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Transformation in museums is located on multiple levels and is coupled with socio-political structures and with the concepts of place, name, display and collection. These concepts will here be further analysed using the aspect of time that has been a latent but significant dimension of my research. Munn (1986: 11-13, 1992: 104) and Giddens (1984: 133) argue that groups understand and act ‘in’ time and create time and space differently. I suggest that it is therefore not a question of one Transformation of museums, but many processes leading up to a democratisation of heritage. I have raised the question whether it is right to moralise about past museum activities and suggest that instead of being condemnatory, it is more constructive to contextualise occurrences and to position them in time and space over a long temporal sequence.

8.1 A complex Transformation

The above-mentioned approach has allowed me to compare and investigate how museums are adjunct to the complex socio-political transition of Transformation from a White agenda to a multicultural agenda with African overtones. A comparison between political speeches, policies and museological articles with archival and ethnographic material has revealed discrepancies. Political speeches and museological texts have juxtaposed past and present to construct Transformation as a paradigm shift, and have described the past as nationalistic. But they have seldom recognised that nationalism still prevails in the form of African and South African nationalism. Transformation was not completely different from what it was before, but seemed to provide a coherent framework compared to the state of the museum sector of the 1980s. It was also expressed as such to envisage problem areas, and to negotiate and continue Transformation. Transformation constantly reconnected with apartheid in speeches and writing for negotiating what Transformation did not constitute and for using old structures for new purposes. This resulted in the conflicting socio-political structures visible in museums materialising different times and spaces. The Natal and Msunduzi Museums reveal materialisations, negotiations and change of social-political powers. These negotiated aspects of ownership and belonging produced institutionalised and spatialised symbols of power.

Museums rest on traditions and structures inherited from the days of the curio-cabinets and Victorian museums which were furthered by cultural, economic and socio-political relationship influenced by colonialism. Museums were part of a web of power and migrations locating the museum in an 'in-between space' as a European institution in Africa. Museums rested on eurocentric scientific values, acted out in an African space, and created a South African eurocentrism. Museums that came into existence under British imperial power inevitably acquired a political association, especially when scrutinised in a present political context. Positioning the museums as a result of colonialism meant locating the museum in a structural 'in-between space' of Africa and Britain without completely being one or the other. During the Union of South Africa and as seen in the *Du Toit Report* (1949), museums found a vernacular form and expressed their interest in how they should institutionalise this relationship.

Present writing on museums as colonial institutions positions them as something alien and in opposition to Transformation, and the writings have overlooked that they were vernacularised. There were many kinds of eurocentrism, and anglophile and Afrikaner museums were grounded in different interests. The Natal Museum located its eurocentrism in a British colonial experience. In a political, cultural and economic connection, it explored local African contexts beneficial to the 'home country'. Museums were part of a larger economic context of migration and exchange of ideas and values. Anglophile museums were captured in an 'in-between space'. Museums were therefore neither European nor African. Afrikaner museums tried to bridge this with their effort to ground themselves in an African experience. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) drew heavily on the local African space in their appropriation of an Afrikaner eurocentrism to bolster belonging and 'selfhood'.

Eurocentrism was therefore appropriated by each institution and by each person visiting the museum, and was shaped according to that person's cultural background. It is therefore impossible to explain exactly what eurocentrism entailed or how it was experienced. At present, however, it has been treated as a static centre and has been highly politicised. The segregation laws and the *State-aided Institution Amendment Act 46 of 1957* made it impossible for the museums to be multicultural institutions, though the visitors were still multicultural. All groups took an interest in the museums and by visitation affirmed the heritage production. By visiting the museum the groups rejected aspects of racial control enforced on them by law and infused themselves with the museum.

Dominy (2004), Webb (1994) and Gore (2004) regard museums as part of the colonial conquest. I suggest that the institutions were not part of conquest, but that their location in White-occupied areas reflected conquest and that they were dependent on colonialism to enhance their collections. Transformation is in the same way economically dependent on the socio-political changes in the 1990s. The past and present are not that different. The present shows similar objectives to the past, focusing especially on traditionalism visible in IKS and *amasiko*. It rejects a eurocentric discourse for a South African-centred one. The *White Papers* (1996) and the *Du Toit Report* (1949) show that the similarities of conflicting views could be brought into resolution.

Webb (1994), Tietz (1994) and Dominy (2004) argue that museums celebrated triumphs of Afrikaner and White nationalism. It was not until the 1970s-1980s, however, that museums materialised these ideals, and by then they started to question the production of heritage. The *Du Toit Report* (1949) and the *De Villiers Report* (1968) encouraged museums to develop as cultural centres and to employ historians envisaging White nationalism. Yet, some suggestions produced during apartheid made Transformation possible. The *Booyesen Report* in the 1960s called for the Natal Museum to employ an archaeologist, resulting in an exploration of African heritage that challenged White nationalism. Post-apartheid museological writings seldom visualised the museum's dissatisfaction with apartheid policies, or how it employed laws to challenge apartheid. Since this did not serve a point when highlighting social inequalities and promoting Transformation, museological texts have not focused on these facts. Transformation ideals have come to materialise faster than apartheid ideas because of greater demands and economic possibilities. The pressure to materialise socio-political structures was greater during Transformation than during apartheid and resulted in a less regionalised heritage approach by the institutions – an approach requiring time and a more stable socio-political climate.

The *Niemand Report* (1975) suggested open-air museums so that they should be more accessible to the (White) community. Hence museums were no longer regarded as insular institutions. This, together with scientific professionalisation, was embryonic in the realisation of Transformation. This concept was reused during Transformation in line with the RDP's focus on local projects and disadvantaged communities. This forms discrepancies between museological writing and ethnographic reality. Museums are created as changed in

museological writing although the structural changes are few. Writings create a space where Transformation seems different from the past and museums use this in turn as examples of how to transform – revealing a reciprocal relationship between text and praxis.

The SAMA conference 1987 was a strong rejection of apartheid and took place three years after the implementation of ‘own affairs’ and ‘general affairs’. The meeting saw how museums were affected by the eco-museum movement and visualised a renegotiation of White power over heritage representations. The initial stage of Transformation was a renegotiation of the self. In museological writing, e.g. Webb (1994), Transformation was used as a way of renegotiating the academic-museological self in post-apartheid South Africa. The Natal Museum was already transforming and investigating how they could stimulate reconciliation and be more community-friendly before 1994. The ANC cultural struggle affected initial Transformation to a minor degree, but the museums negotiated similar ideological movements like the BCM, post-colonialism and new museology, thus making it possible to progress in the ANC’s desired direction.

The democratic dispensation negotiated and relied heavily on apartheid structures and stereotypes to promote Transformation. The South African constitution in 1983 made explicit what previous constitutions suggested, showing a society that fostered and entrenched separate development. The 1996 constitution was similar and spelled out and protected cultural identities. After 1994, however, the citizens were by law equal and free to assume a cultural identity of their own choice. Continuing to further an expression of cultural difference may seem a paradox. In this context, however, it constituted a renegotiation of apartheid classifications, providing a ‘shelved’ cultural heritage insuring the democratic expression of all cultural heritages. ‘Shelving’ cultural heritage ensures cultural representation from a known point of reference; it does not build a national unity but foregrounds respect and equal treatment of heritage needed before attempting to build a unified heritage expression. Yet the intensified African approach after 1997 and African nationalism in political speeches suggest that the developing national unity might not necessarily accommodate everyone.

Transformation has many temporalities, as it is constructed and acted ‘in’ time differently. The Natal Museum initiated change in 1974 with the appointment of an archaeologist, Msunduzi Museum in the 1990s with the exploration of possibilities for a music museum. For the larger museum sector change started with the 1987 SAMA conference, for subversive

groups in the early 1980s, and for the government in 1992 with the *MUSA*. These times are not independent from each other but are connected through museological writings and proposals, e.g., articles by Stuckenberg (1987) and by Mazel and Wright (1987) which came to be used as references on which Transformation in museums was constructed. Transformation is a process of constant change, a flow of agents acting on and rejecting socio-political structures.

Despite previous developments, Transformation has been considered a product of post-1994. Transformation became an arena for the struggle of power where the ideals of a democratic South African heritage were blueprinted, e.g., in the *White Paper* (1998) and the transformation budget guidelines (2004). The museums related to change differently. Before 1994 the Natal Museum was changing according to its own agenda, actively trying to be a tool in the community. Msunduzi Museum (VM) followed government agendas. After 1994 Transformation seemed to be experienced as complex, possibly owing to the change of political dispensation and directorship. After 1994 it became compulsory to implement Transformation ideologies. This made it difficult for the museums to carry out any individual change.

Texts, articles and policy documents give an understanding of politics and ideologies imperative to Transformation. *MUSA* and the ANC policy give different ideas of heritage. *MUSA* took the museums' need as a primary consideration and the community's as secondary, whereas ANC policy did exactly the opposite. Apart from political disagreement this is one of the main reasons why Transformation resulted in conflicting interpretation and application. South African museological writings did not criticise the ANC's suggestions, perhaps because this would be interpreted as a positioning against Transformation. The outcome of Transformation is a result of the communication and non-communication between the museums and advocates of Transformation. The museums could have criticised and suggested changes but did not, and their silence makes them responsible for the outcome of Transformation within their own sector.

Archival studies have not revealed any communication between the ANC and the two museums in the early 1990s. Lack of communication might well be the reason why the museum sector experienced the ANC as unprepared and why the ANC experienced the museum sector as insular and sectarian. The lack of communication left a gap of knowledge

between the involved parties, and Transformation was therefore regarded by my informants as regression. There is an ambiguity in what was and was not accepted as Transformation. At the same time, the government implemented apartheid structures, e.g., the suggestion for flagship institutions, but it did not trust the museums to transform by their own devices. Transformation did not make the museums independent but implemented extensive control systems seen in the Msunduzi Museum Board of Trustees up until 2003: in the *Cultural Laws second Amendment Act 46 of 2001*,¹⁸³ and in the implementation of the flagship institution, SAHRA, the NHC and the transformation budget. This ensured that the museums followed the overall plan for change. Transformation initiated earlier stagnated while the museums became lost in a Transformation ‘time-pocket’. The ‘time-pocket’ with apartheid and Transformation times coinciding, creating and trying to resolve conflicting spaces. Social time is unstable when society is ‘in’ transformation and is making places and spaces exist ‘in’ multiple times. Transformation is characteristic of ‘time-pockets’ where things occur in-between structural spaces. Consistently using and rejecting the past and present, Transformation tries to situate itself ‘in’ democratic time. This approach allows a deeper understanding of change and avoids a polarisation between groups and eras.

The Transformation ‘time-pocket’ was similar to what the museums experienced during their early times as part of eurocentric cultures functioning in African spaces having difficulty shaping a South African expression. Transformation meant that the museums followed uniform guidelines, but these were in the beginning only window-dressing, because the ideological frame-work took time to implement structurally. Post-1994 Transformation was experienced by the government as museums not changing fast enough and by the museums as being in confusion. Restructuring was depicted by my informants as devastating for the institutions.

Transformation was a shift from a White male-institutionalised leadership to a male African leadership which in many cases entailed having a White female as assistant director. This was perhaps to produce equilibrium between past and present power relations. Director Brian Stuckenberg’s retirement from the Natal Museum allowed the assistant director Jason Londt to be appointed to the post. This ensured a sense of security, continuation and stability for the institution at a time of uncertainty. African directors are in many cases regarded as the

¹⁸³ Which stripped the director of voting power in the museum’s Board of Trustees.

product of BEE and their capacity is questioned, though in fact they are a result of the unjust apartheid system of dividing people and diminishing their right to education and employment. Mistrust is also expressed towards female staff-members (regardless of race), especially females in leadership positions. This is part of a larger cultural problem involving gender inequality. Transformation strives for gender and ethnic equity but still has a long way to go.

8.2 Contested museums

The museums, as places, are a connective tissue for human agency, where socio-political structures materialise. Each museum is therefore a unique place and I suggest that museum studies should not theorize *about* museums, but *from* museums as lived entities. The museum cannot be understood apart from the real lived experience studied across time and space; it should be understood according to its individual situation and be studied as such. Locating the investigation in terms of the agents' comprehension of the museums produces a different and more cohesive understanding than with the visitor. The visitor arrives with expectations of museums either as a 'forum' or a 'cathedral', and for some African, Indian and Coloured visitors (and especially non-visitors) the museum is connected to apartheid. But an agent perceives the museum differently, and the place is therefore constructed in relation to the understanding of structural transformation processes. Agents create and act out Transformation, but visitors experience only fragments of this. Agents and visitors are therefore 'in' different times and experience and create Transformation differently.

The museums are the field of investigation – a demarcated physical location that composes a section of the urban landscape, becoming a tangible and intangible symbol. The museum is tangible as a physical location in the urban landscape which is possible to visit; intangible as being stretched out beyond its physical premises, e.g., by educational officers' work and outreach programmes. Museums are not just a location but the agents become the museum, and so I stress the need to treat the museum as an ethnographic field. Agents create the museum which is narrated in multiple ways by visitors.

The urban landscape and museums are lived experiences that are acted out by everyone who came or did not come in contact with them. Museums need to be analysed in relation to this in order to understand how socio-political structures, gender, race and social hierarchy affected ownership and belonging. Pietermaritzburg was a mosaic of people living together but during

apartheid several groups became temporal visitors in the urban landscape. The effect of racial segregation is paramount for understanding the meaning of museums. It affects who belonged to, and who governed, the urban landscape and the museum. Since the 1990s the urban landscape has become the opposite of a White area, but museums are still seen as White enclaves, due to the reciprocal relationship between people's perception and the praxis of the urban landscape. Transformation initiated a democratisation of place. It changed a negative association into something positive through displays, and staff-members actively invited new audiences.

Contested meanings of the urban landscape must not only be seen as obstacles, but as strategies to develop democratic museums. The museum needs to be used by those groups who have a negative association to alter their narrative. This is something that the museums have understood but not necessarily the general public. The more an area is used, the more it will be created 'in' a new time. Visitors (and non visitors) have through narratives locked museums 'in' apartheid time. Museums are therefore in a 'time-pocket', existing in both apartheid and democratic time dependent on narration. Places are consequently located 'in' manifold times.

8.2.1 The Natal Museum

The Natal Museum was established as an anglophile monument to eurocentric scientific interests. This signals associated with British colonialism and were to some consistent with violence, domination, restriction of rights and racism. Since there are no documents from early time revealing how Indians, Africans and Coloureds experienced the Natal Museum, it is uncertain if this connection can be made. If Indians, Africans and Coloureds associated other institutions and structures with these objectives and resisted them, then it is possible that they would have experienced museums similarly. Archival records, however, show the use of the museum rather than its rejection. All 'cultural groups' visited the museum, acting on eurocentric knowledge and heritage. If the museum stood in stark contrast to certain groups, then the museum would not have been visited. Museums were eurocentric but were used by a multicultural community and were thus experienced differently. So the person who acts and lives eurocentrism is also responsible for furthering its values.

Whites had ownership of the museum, and its activities reflected colonial expansion locally and in Africa in general. In museological writing museums came to be associated with the execution of power and with scientific eurocentric narratives connected to biological determinism. But as I have shown in this dissertation, the Victorian type of museum that Transformation criticised had already been challenged in the *Du Toit Report* (1949). During apartheid Victorian museums were considered outdated, but Transformation has erroneously equalised apartheid and colonial structures. In terms of Transformation for some museologists and politicians, the colonial period stood for everything that was disliked about apartheid.

The Natal Museum's inner and outer architecture formed an inseparable unity and reflected eurocentric constructed spaces of empirical scientific knowledge acted out by agents and visitors which became institutionalised. The architecture provided an 'objective' evolutionary classification of objects associated with hierarchical relationships between European and other civilisations. IKS was prompted as a central tool to challenge normative, eurocentric ways of constructing science. IKS could not, however, provide an alternative to the architecture and displays. Nor could it provide an alternative to how to use the museum, or supply ideas how to build new kinds of museum compliant with the ideals of IKS.

IKS is vaguely defined and functions mainly as rhetoric to polarise past and present. Efforts have not been made to develop the concept into more constructive approaches. IKS can be nation-building if it is developed as a means to construct and not only deconstruct. If IKS is only directed towards African heritage, as at present, then it is not representative of democracy. Hence Transformation cannot be considered completely democratic. IKS has resulted in the construction of exclusive spaces that were similar to apartheid in terms of ownership. They showed a transition from one dominant power to the other as can be seen, e.g., in Ncome Museum architecture

The Natal Museum was 'becoming' through its agents while its alterations excluded and included components and narratives. So it assumed and revealed its socio-political position. It is therefore not the place that needs to be reconciled, but dissonant groups. Groups that experienced themselves as excluded must use the place to reconcile with it. Whites can only initiate the process through invitation, but after that the excluded must themselves take active responsibility. This has been the Natal Museum's mission since the late 1980s. In an ideal world this gives the responsibility of Transformation not only to Whites but to all groups.

The Natal Museum's new wing provided for racially zoned displays. When constructing and visiting the museum agents and visitors acted out and lived separation and participated in racial segregation. A decade later, however, segregationist signs were removed and opening hours written in Zulu, gestures which made the museum less racially divided, and showed who desired visitors were. Transformation of place meant a reclassification of race and space. The museum encouraged multicultural use a decade before 1994. Transformation has nevertheless locked museums in an expression of injustice, so the efforts to transform become invisible next to the critique of past times that has neglected the temporally conditioned changes.

When Whites, e.g. Webb (1994), Gore (2004) and Brooks (1988, 2005) produced texts during Transformation about museums as contested, they acknowledged the problems of museums but subdued efforts to change them. The time that museums are 'in' is dependent on narration; these writers, though in Transformation, reversed time to be 'in' apartheid narrating Transformation to the experience of those with a negative association of museums. My conclusion is that museological writing constructs a Transformation that is not always coherent with reality. This created 'time-pockets'. A deepened analysis of the meta-narrative of museological discourse, positioning texts in structural and temporal conditions, could provide interesting studies for the future.

8.2.2 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex

The Msunduzi Museum comprises layers of narratives concentrated in one place, but connected through socio-political structures to other places. The museum was an Afrikaner memorial, embracing Afrikaner identity, mythology and history and projecting an exclusive sense of belonging. Belonging is a key aspect upheld and celebrated as special by many Afrikaners, just as the Ncome Museum was upheld and celebrated as special by many Africans. These two places were to (some) Afrikaners and Africans a materialisation of mythologies and origins. They were to be held more important than the museum as an institution, and the displays enhanced the place's role. Narrations created an expectation and although the museums changed character it was their originally intended meaning that visitors (and non-visitors) expected.

Places that have religious or political meaning are often regarded as suitable sites for museums, but erecting museums at such locations is problematic and often not feasible. It is of great importance to contextualise and deconstruct the consequences and significance of the place before situating museums on layers of contested narratives. Yet if this happens to be carried out, museums should ideally function as questioning organs and contextualise the place with informative displays.

Msunduzi Museum (VM), like Ncome Museum, created a self and materialised fix-point from which Afrikaner and African identity could be maintained and compared. It was about creating a self and not an other. Exclusive representations of heritage have been criticised, though in terms of past but not present representations. Analysing reports, however, it becomes clear that the government was never pleased with the Msunduzi Museum's execution of heritage. The government did not regard the museum's heritage approach as a sufficient component in cultural propaganda.

The Msunduzi Museum (VM) and the Ncome Museum represented identity drawing on land, struggle, independence and accomplishment by political leaders in the guise of past heroes. Museums are not static entities but are subject to temporal shifts. The Msunduzi Museum (VM) changed from a place initially rejecting anglophile values to a place rejecting African, Indian and Coloured values during apartheid. It then became a place that rejected apartheid during Transformation, just like the Ncome Museum that also drew on African nationalism. To ensure Transformation nationalism must be contextualised at all levels in society in order to benefit a democratic heritage expression and not perpetuate ethnic exclusiveness, stereotypes and segregation.

A place is constituted by human agency that chooses to retain or reject certain meanings, e.g., continuing to zone the Voortrekker Complex as an Afrikaner area. It is the awareness of the meaning that enables a deconstruction and contextualisation of the Afrikaner in past and present. All groups' heritage and history need to be better contextualised. A contextualisation of Afrikaner heritage entails the deconstruction of its present rhetorical perception as opposing Transformation as well as the deconstruction of Transformation politics. This could lead to a constructive way of dealing with past and present mythologies and nationalisms. Groups cannot be regarded as separate entities, but are the result of interaction.

The Msunduzi Museum has chosen not to polarise ‘cultural group’s’ past or present, but to unify them through ‘shelving’ – visible in allowing presentation of Afrikaner heritage in the Voortrekker Complex. In a global heritage discussion, the museum exemplifies how symbols of conflicting ideologies after political transition were allowed to continue to exist. This is what I regard as the essence of Transformation – allowing new and old expressions of heritage to exist side by side. Reconciliation is not apolitical, however, but is a component of present cultural and socio-political propaganda superimposing past political structures. Reconciliation is about compromises where legal, economic and social boundaries are spatially and temporally broken to facilitate negotiation.

Governmental officials continue to perpetuate the museum as an exclusive place, a trend which does not allow reconciliation but rather locks the museum ‘in’ apartheid times. This is not Transformation, but the expression of Transformation. The Msunduzi Museum is aware of the political debate but has instead embraced the conflicting aspects rather than juxtaposing them. Visual reminders such as the Zulu traditional homestead and the Indian Shiva Perumal temple indicate that the museum is not a White enclave, but only shows small fragments of a more complex heritage reality. Respatialisations stressed themes of self, struggle, patriarch leaders, traditionalism, victory and values founded on aspects of a heteronormative family. Apartheid and Transformation drew on similar themes embedding and allowing space, time and structures to become one another.

Transformation was not a paradigm shift, but was ‘shelving’ through spatially reorganising symbols of power represented by the satellite museums and the main museum area. The present political dispensation reviled the past cultural symbols. This is either because previous dominant narratives revealed something about how Africans perceive themselves, or because the democratic dispensation needs to be seen as protecting all heritage expressions. Transformation set out to be multicultural, but the launch of the Ncome Museum showed a materialisation of nationalistic and exclusive expression of political heritage ideals similar to those of apartheid. Transformation can be expressed as African nationalism hiding behind a multicultural facade. The primary objective was not to contextualise, but to make visible spatially what had not been seen before in a process of ‘shelving’. In the future, however, museums need to stop ‘shelving’ heritage and to start considering its united multicultural expression. Apartheid is over, but spatial expressions continues to perpetuate the stereotypes and separation constructed during apartheid.

8.2.3 Contested names

Names correspond to ways of relating to power. Belonging and renaming materialise Transformation of power and the way in which belonging was understood. Names infuse the urban landscape with intangible symbols of power. Rejections and suggestions for a new name for the Msunduzi Museum (VM) were carried out by Whites who through their suggestion claimed and constituted ownership of the museum. Renaming was in its extreme case explained by Holliday (2007-11-26) as abuse of power. I do not fully agree, though he has a point since renaming removes part of the urban landscape history.

The names of the two museums referred respectively to anglophile and Afrikaner group belonging; both names were associated with the right to land in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer war. The names were constituted 'in' one temporal space that was re-narrated as time and structures changed. The names had initially little connection to Africans, Indians and Coloureds. Both names through post-apartheid critique came to constitute a negative association because of their associations with Whites. Contemporary museological and political narratives locked the name 'in' apartheid time – which symbolically re-narrated apartheid temporality. This visualised the problems, but the constant re-narration made it difficult for museums to be perceived as transformed. Old names were regarded as standing in opposition to Transformation while new names were seen as coherent with Transformation.

Renaming is political and entails altering 'White names' from the colonial and apartheid context to names reflecting the present political structure. I question whether it is effective to erase signs of history based on their symbolism of injustice. I suggest that it is important to remember all facets of the past, even those that were painful. Transformation should educate and contextualise the past. It should not make it invisible, but create a balance between past and present. Materialising only dominant facets of history is not a democratic expression; but it is a representation of Transformation. Yet if a name is misleading and hinders visitation, then renaming is crucial. Msunduzi Museum (VM) chose a local name and included the old name to ensure democratic representations. A local name is seemingly apolitical and gives an opportunity to people to identify with it. Renaming has been equated with reconciliation, but has not been experienced overall as positive. The renaming of Msunduzi Museum (VM) engaged only a small number of Whites. They were already variously associated with the institution. Those needing to reconcile with the museum did not participate in the process.

Renaming did not concern the general public, but was articulated to bolster Transformation. It was therefore a negotiation between the institutions, the advocates of Transformation and Whites.

8.3 Collections and time

Collections are attempts to materialise socio-political structures and to lock and compress time and space in sequences of artefacts in order to produce a comprehensible and institutionalised explanation of time. Collections elucidate how museums understand socio-political processes and what they choose to recall as important for ‘time-reckoning’. Time and space are materialised in collections, they are elucidated by collectors and reinterpreted by museums, e.g., for display purposes. Each museum has an individual ‘time-reckoning’ connected to museological and academic discourses and traditions.

Museums collected historical and traditional material culture as representations of origin functioning as identity-markers. Knowing one’s origin confirms identity and separates or unites people. One of my main conclusions is that trying to find and authenticate traditional aspects in other people’s culture was equal to trying to find roots in the self. Previously it was about finding White roots; during Transformation it was about finding South African roots. It is also about a South African epistemological centre departing from a eurocentric one. To achieve this museums have to collect South African material expressions of all groups. There is an urgent need to find cross-cultural heritage – material culture that could visualise a multicultural South African heritage and avoid representations of diverse heritages. Transformation unfolds as reinventing past collection activities carried out by new agents ‘in’ a different time. So the museum is made to seem transformed.

Whites collected and donated to the museums. This has been criticised but, if analysed, reveals aspects of time and relationships. The objects account for two temporalities simultaneously: the time ‘in’ which objects were made and the time ‘in’ which they were donated. The latter reveals a relationship between the collected and the collector, but museums only find the time ‘in’ which the objects were made important. Through analysing classification systems and documentation, the time ‘in’ which donations were made is revealed as crucial for positioning collections in time and space. Such an investigation deconstructs Transformation’s negative approach to collections and highlights socio-political

structures and relationships. Economic and socio-political structures made donations vary. Artefacts embody the donor's relationship to a specific time, e.g., the Great Trek, the Bambatha rebellion or the struggle. Donations were considered as given to the nation through museums which were concerned with making the collections follow national priorities. Representation of heritage and 'time-reckoning' were made predominantly through White donors, posing a problem during Transformation which called on others besides Whites to collect.

Museums' 'time-reckoning' is not linear and cannot be accounted for beforehand. Collections fluctuate, patterns of material stop, are repeated and are affected by socio-political structures. There is often an institutionalised way of collecting based on already amassed material. This has little to do with the actual reality, but concerns how museums perceive past and present. The museums 'in' times of transformation collected traditional material culture that represented a stable social environment, the opposite to the actual reality.

In Transformation human agency reshapes time and space and brings the museum's 'time-reckoning' into contention. This is because at one and the same time it rejects and affirms the same objects. Transformation was expressed so as to introduce new kinds of collecting activities that addressed past-times bias, but it continued to rest on previous representations. New collection objectives took time to materialise. Transformation entailed an ideological shift using socio-political structures of apartheid, e.g., legal frameworks. This created conflicting meanings and made it difficult for museums to find new ways to 'time-reckon' and resume previous methods. When the museums 'time-reckon' transformation processes, they are in a 'time-pocket', trying to capture fluctuating structures without fully knowing how to materialise them. Museums were forced to tell time when 'in' Transformation, and this appeared in their collections as material confusion, using and rejecting the past simultaneously. This is not visible through insular artefacts, but when studying collections holistically. A strategy to resolve the 'time-pocket' has been to follow government guidelines stipulating how museums should relate to time and change. Yet the newly amassed artefacts are similar to those collected previously; the difference is the time 'in' which the collection activities were. Transformation makes material culture appear different; time therefore creates the expectations of material.

Amasiko was articulated as a new way of collecting disassociated from Whites. It aims at non-material collection and has roots in new museology's focus on intangible heritage. Yet it affirms entrenched stereotypes of African heritage as non-materialistic and oral which Transformation has rejected and sought to deconstruct. *Amasiko* was an effort to rebalance power relations and has polarised traditional collections. These were perceived as 'dead' material culture because they were not collected or represented by the group that used them and were not sufficiently documented. An object is never numb; it is a reflection of the social relations read into it. Even interpreting it as numb articulates how objects, past and present relationships, were experienced.

Amasiko aims to collect events; the collection is 'in' time with the actual event and not 'in' time with the collector's material perception of a culture. In a museological perspective *amasiko* represents Transformation and a society in Transformation. It can allow museums to find alternative ways to document a multicultural community, to represent previous disadvantaged groups, and to make visible what was previously not represented. *Amasiko* disrupts the museums 'time-reckoning' and complements it. Transformation is disruption and complementation of time, space and structures of previous collections to allow a multicultural representation. But *amasiko* was indistinctly defined and this made it difficult to implement. Museums therefore continued to rest on already established collection traditions. Although the museums have not fully implemented *amasiko* it has resulted in donations, seen especially in the Msunduzi Museum's documentation of the Hindu Indian community.

Collections have been perceived as representing Africans negatively. This might be so, but I suggest that it reflects a flow of social relations between Whites and Africans. African material cultures had meaning for Whites' understanding of the self. The focus on traditionalism made African heritage appear 'prehistoric' in comparison to Whites. This revealed the need for a prehistory that Whites lacked spatially. The material culture did not represent Africans, but the land Whites inhabited. It represented what Whites were not, and helped position the White self. In a similar way apartheid reflects what South Africa is not at present, and this helps position multiculturalism. If we assume that African material is a representation of a White self, then it needs to be made clear that the self is not a static centre as Transformation discourses wrongly treated it. Transformation's perception of Whites is a topic for further research.

During colonial and apartheid times Indian and Coloured material culture was not collected because it did not narrate anything in relation to the White self. At present the dominant African socio-political environment does not necessitate Indian and Coloured material to narrate the self visualised in the lack of material. This means that the past and present more or less excluded this expression from the museum's 'time-reckoning'. At present little effort has been made to adjust this unequal relationship, and by comparison African material culture is overrepresented.

Due to racial classification in the past, the museums have collected material culture as representing diverse cultures. This is 'shelving', which represents and stereotypes but also ensures that aspects of heritage are democratically positioned and portioned. Coloured material culture, however, is scarcely represented because the museums found it difficult to specify Coloured material culture. The representation of reality in the collection is not necessarily factual, but has a degree of veracity in its reflection of how people 'in' specific times imagined it to be. To perpetuate stereotypes makes the collection appear representative, because it builds on already known components. Material culture represents agendas created 'in' a specific time. Amassed struggle material, e.g., is used to narrate nationalistic agendas in a way very similar to that used for Voortrekker material in the past. Both categories of material culture tell a success story of heteronormative male heroes overcoming obstacles in the quest for self-governance and land. The objects have changed but the theme is the same. Therefore the way to 'time-reckon' changes slower than material culture used to tell time.

The classification systems contextualise the flow of social relations and incorporate them into a larger narrative of time. Classification systems are locked 'in' time, and if used when not answering questions the classification system is 'out' of time. The numerological system used by the museums in the past answered questions about donors, and the point of entrance of objects. These issues are relevant for a museological contextualisation of collections. A numerical system puts the collection in a socio-political temporal frame allowing the researcher to deconstruct the collection. But it gives little information about the material, though it reveals who had an interest in the museum, economic possibilities to donate, and prevailing relations to other groups. Classification systems uphold the compressions of time and space 'in' time. These are not fixed but can be reinterpreted and reclassified as agents ask new questions of the material culture. Change of classification system means change of the perception of time and reorganisation of meaning.

The Natal Museum's collection experienced several changes in terms of classification. The reclassifications were not insular phenomena, but followed socio-political structures and occurrences during Transformation when they became a part of modernisation. The museums were in need of a new narrative that could contextualise the collection. The new classification system was overall eurocentric and did not implement any of the Transformation ideologies. In this way Transformation employs structures experienced as suitable, though they do not necessarily follow the prescribed ideological framework. It is questionable if these classification systems fulfilled the requirements of Transformation or whether they were just simple solutions.

New classification systems and collection policies were implemented to control and enhance the knowledge of material culture. In many cases the knowledge had been 'lost' due to previous systems not supplying answers to questions asked by the new classification system. New classification systems made the material culture appear as if knowledge had expanded it. New classification systems became symbols of Transformation and of control and were believed to be new narration and representation. They were also about filling gaps and challenging previous ethnographic methods. Yet Transformation continued to build and expand on existing stereotypes. While ethnographic collections were challenged, archaeological collections were not addressed because archaeology bolstered the African Renaissance, showing origins and civilisations before colonialism.

8.4 Displays and space

Transformation is spatially visible in displays where social relations are produced, reproduced and maintained, never being neutral and passive, but subject to temporal shift. Displays are constantly 'becoming' mediated by agents who compress time, space and power while reshaping material culture into symbols ready for the visitor to experience. Displays are representative of the time the agents are 'in' while creating them. Yet displays unfold differently depending on the time visitors are 'in'. When visiting the display the visitor's time may be different from the time 'in' which the display was constructed. The two 'times' can conflict with each other and when this occurs the displays are in a 'time pocket'.

Changes proposed in reports during apartheid took several years to materialise in displays. Hence displays and reports reflected different socio-political spaces. During Transformation the pressure to materialise instantly suggested changes intensified to position museums as different from apartheid. Images produced during Transformation are both in line with policy documents and with apartheid ideals. They visualise two socio-political spaces simultaneously which exist in contestation. Displays during Transformation came to represent both past and present socio-political spaces which appeared as an irregular process. This positioned displays in a 'time-pocket' where different times coexisted and created conflicting spaces of dominant powers.

The Natal Museum had started to change before 1994, but was not recognised as such by the advocates of Transformation. This positioned the museum in an 'in-between space' of being in Transformation but not being regarded as such. There are at least two different kinds of Transformation – before 1994 carried out on individual initiative by the institutions and after 1994 centralised through documents. For the Msunduzi Museum the latter was easier to implement by following government guidelines. For the Natal Museum the latter stance was more difficult because they had already started to change and the government guidelines did not meet the terms of the museum.

An alteration and critique of the historical narratives of social relations previously used was carried out during Transformation. What was overlooked, however, was the patriarchal, heterosexual, Christian perspective under which displays continue to exist. This perspective has not been deconstructed in terms of display. Transformation is clearly gender and religious bias but strives to be perceived otherwise. Present South African museological writing and political rhetoric has polarised past and present. The way that the museums were articulated to stereotype Africans and glorify Whites can in many cases only be speculated about. Only the latter are clearly visible. The issues reflect a larger socio-political environment and have neglected to discuss representations of Indians and Coloureds as they do those of Africans. As in the past minorities are discarded, and the reason why 'shelved' representations are important is seen, e.g., in *A river runs through it...Msunduzi*. The display is a reflection of how South Africans perceive themselves as separate enclaves of people creating one South African identity.

Display, place and material culture are intrinsically connected. Agents create them through different activities as a result of or in discrepancy with socio-political structures. An example is the ethnographic display in the Natal Museum that was turned into *African Art* and in which some artefacts were renegotiated in *Sounds of Africa*. Transformation expresses agents' classification and alteration of resources that created new representations of time and space. Displays are 'becoming' when in use, e.g. when constructed or visited, or when they are written about. Eurocentric classification created different spaces for White and African material culture. Displays of White heritage were presented so as to remember the past; African heritage in past displays was meant to be understood. This resulted in other groups being faced with a memory not necessarily theirs and with a eurocentric explanation of the self. This can be compared to present displays dealing with apartheid that aim to present a memory of the past directed at those not benefiting from apartheid. Whites are presently faced with a memory and explanation of apartheid that might not be theirs.

Displays were created using eurocentric infrastructures of evolutionary typologisation, critiqued in new museology, since information came to be treated as unquestioned truth. The method socialises and spatialises time and often wrongly constructs borderlines visualising social and racial hierarchy. Commonly overlooked is that information continued to be used during Transformation as a way to narrate a story, e.g., in *Sisonke* and *Birth of Democracy*, both regarded as transformed displays. Evolutionary typologisation became important during Transformation to deconstruct apartheid narratives, the construction of African cultures as timeless, CNE, religious fundamentalism and African nationalism. Focusing on development and similarities and differences in history helps to deconstruct IKS and position African culture in a global socio-political and economic context.

Attempts to break with eurocentrism and evolution theory are seen in displays materialising IKS and *amasiko*. These concepts, however, have not clearly been contextualised in terms of time and culture and are created as agents used them. They have assumed a stark African essentialist position and *amasiko* and IKS spatialise a pride in African heritages, sharing ideas and similarities with the *Du Toit Report* (1949). Agents' appropriation of structures is therefore at the centre of Transformation. Transformation clearly stipulated what ideologies to materialise and displays made these structures visible. If this was necessary during apartheid it would have been more visible in reports, but it can only be seen in the *Du Toit Report*

(1949). This means that the museum reflected apartheid although this was not as clearly spelled out as was the demand of Transformation.

Msunduzi Museum (VM) was an exclusive Afrikaner space, but the Natal Museum showed variations of White heritage in the *History Hall* (anglophile, Afrikaner and Portuguese), but denied other groups' heritage. The museum therefore had an advantage, since it allowed a more inclusive space that opened up for Transformation. During this time the museum engaged in an effort to appropriate multicultural components in the White space. White and other heritage was not contextualised but multicultural layers were merely applied to the space. Consequently, instead of levelling out representation, this highlighted spatial inequalities. Heritage needs to be better contextualised, but the advocates of Transformation have emphasised constructing spaces rather than contextualising them and the development of new representations has led to nationalism being explored and not avoided.

Zoning of White heritage has been criticised, but zoning of African spaces in Transformation is regarded as positive, e.g., *African Art* and the *Sounds of Africa*. I call for a definition of Africa in the context of museums. These spaces are exclusive and deny Indian, Coloureds and Whites a place in the African space and are not coherent to Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance. Transformation was only interested in deconstructing spaces reflecting past power structures and has made no effort to deconstruct exclusive African spaces. Transformation has not come to unfold its fullest potential to represent inclusive spaces and has turned to the method of 'shelving' to come to terms with the demands of representation.

The Natal Museum in the 1980s produced radical spaces – the same spaces that became politically coherent in Transformation and less challenging than previously. These questioned normative narratives and White politics. The Natal Museum has continued this approach in Transformation and has therefore also been able, during Transformation, to question the present normative writing on history. The possibility to question nationalism rests on the ability of the researcher – something that has been visualised in *SOPHISA*. This display can be regarded as a response to the museological environment, a call to confront and improve the concept of Transformation and use the resources that the new political dispensation supplied to enhance knowledge of history and culture

When the Natal Museum started to question dominant narratives in the 1980s, conflicting political spaces unfolded in the museum. The 1987 SAMA conference, *SOPHISA* proposals and the implementation of mannequins in the *History Hall* appeared at the same time, showing that the museum used and rejected White nationalism and BCM simultaneously. This shows that the museums are not static but lived entities. Msunduzi Museum (VM) redefined the self at the same time, unfolding as a challenge to African nationalism. Later the museum allocated a space for every cultural expression, zoning heritage representations to avail a democratic representation – a ‘shelved’ heritage expression. Both museums elaborated and reclassified familiar themes and introduced multicultural researchers and community involvement representing previously disadvantaged communities.

The Transformed museums incorporated new displays next to the old that represented different conflicting structures, giving the museum a spatial history materialising different times and modes of display. Displays became multicultural through construction or alteration. They represented a ‘hyper-reality’ of what South Africa wanted to be, but was still too segregated to become. Transformation did not necessarily entail a holistic or different representation of history, but it meant that everyone had a chance to participate in the representation.

Transformation increased the demand to present African heritage, resulting in the Msunduzi Museum (VM) becoming positioned in a complex web of self and other in conflict with the ideology of the place visualised, e.g., in *Birth of Democracy*. *SOPHISA* in the Natal Museum was both in line with and challenged African Renaissance by expanding old narratives. Therefore Transformations did not unfold as a process of reconciliation and nation-building, but as a process of different powers spatially materialising in constant transition from the past. The Msunduzi Museum (VM), though conflicting with the meaning of place, acted on African nationalism as a solution to Transformation. This endorsed a continued renegotiation of the self, e.g., in the *Education of the Voortrekker Child*, the *Redisplay of the Great Trek* and in *Not only a white man’s war*. Transformation was therefore an awareness of the past and a reconfiguration of politically constructed histories. It must, however, be noted that this only applied to African and Indian groups while the Msunduzi Museum (VM) continued to reject anglophile culture and only most recently included Coloured heritage. Transformation was a kind of correction of the past and a change of spatialised power seen, e.g., in Natal Museum’s

Sounds of Africa. Displays were promoted as transformed but the outcome was not much different from older displays.

During Transformation, self-expression and community projects became important as seen, e.g., in the *Threads in Time* and *Traditional Zulu Dress*. These are more conservative, however, than displays produced during the 1980s. *Traditional Zulu Dress* is regarded as a transformed space on the basis that it is situated in the previously White-zoned *History Hall* and made by Zulu staff-members. Community projects are not necessarily more holistic, Transformed or improved, but invite the community to the museum and entail an aspect of belonging and ownership which was imperative during Transformation. A trained archaeologist, anthropologist or historian may produce more holistic and transformed displays that question culture rather than affirm stereotypes. Community projects are deliberate attempts to remove a tainted image of ethnography. It is possible to conclude that it was not the outcome of the display but the method and the time that were imperative, though only if it concerned ethnography. Archaeological displays have not been addressed the same way, therefore the demands of Transformation are quite arbitrary.

Transformation was not one process, but many complex transitions from apartheid to democracy. It is a multivocal complex web negotiating structures, time, space, power and narratives. Transformation situates the museum in an 'in-between space' of structural change. This produced 'time-pockets' where both apartheid and democratic time coexist in contestation and negotiation. It is impossible to state when Transformation started, and it must be seen as many transformation processes connected to each other over a long temporal sequence. Transformation emphasises a transition from apartheid and is South African nationalism emphasising multiculturalism with African overtones. This seeks to create something uniquely South African and to position it against the west and ensure representations of all groups in order to build a democratic South African heritage.

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APPENDIX I: GENEALOGY OF THE MSUNDUZI MUSEUM INCORPORATING THE VOORTREKKER COMPLEX

1912. The Voortrekker Museum opened to the public in the Church of Vow premises. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1960. The EG Jansen extension opened to the public. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1962. The Voortrekker Memorial Church opened to the public. Situated next to the museum, it is not a part of the museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1984. Andries Pretorius House opened at the museum premises. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1987. The Oldest House incorporated as a satellite museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1987. The Longmarket Girls School acquired as the main building. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1989. Zaylager incorporated as a satellite museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1989. Amajuba incorporated as a satellite museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1989. Blood River Heritage Site incorporated as a satellite museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1994. Shiva Perumal Temple opened at the museum premises. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1998. Ncome Monument opened to the public and managed under the museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

1999. Ncome Museum established and managed under the museum. Name: The Voortrekker Museum

2002. Blood River Heritage Site, Amajuba and Zaylager are managed by the Voortrekker Monument.

2002. Traditional Zulu homestead opened at the museum premises. Name: The Voortrekker Museum.

2007. The Voortrekker Museum changes its name to the Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

2007. The herb garden installation opened at the museum. Name: The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex.

APPENDIX II: PICTURES

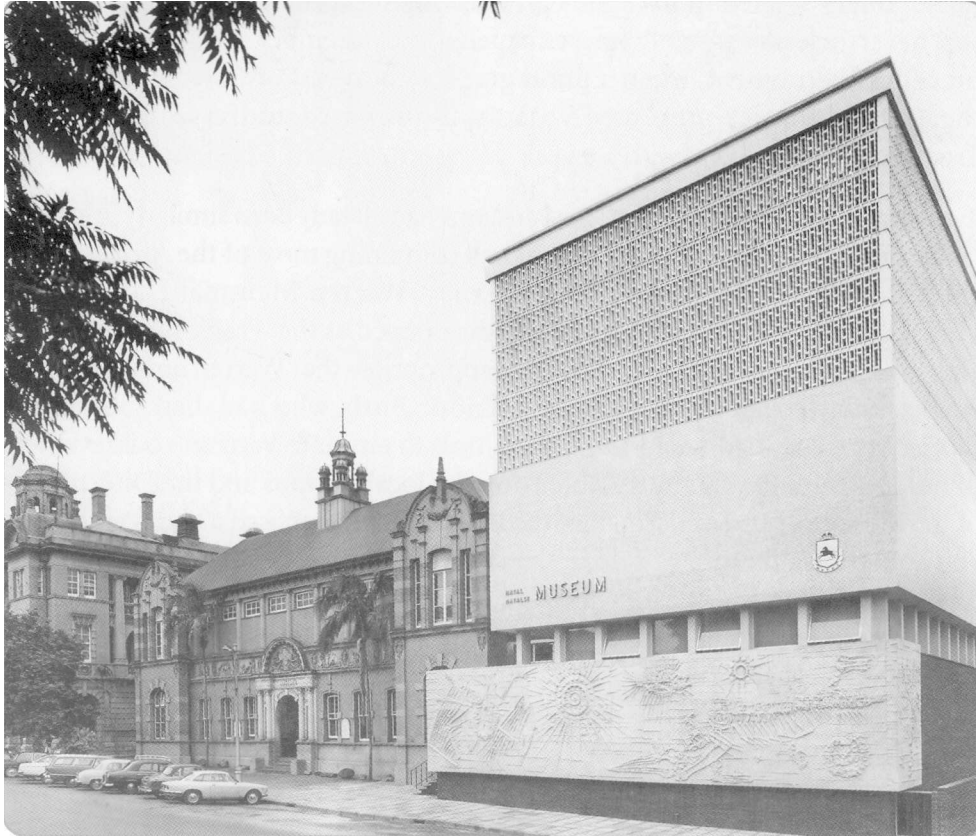


Figure 1 The Natal Museum. The older building to the left, and the 1958 addition to the right (from Guest 2006).



Figure 2 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. The Church of Vow (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2006).



Figure 3 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. The main building, former Longmarket Street Girl's School (Photograph by Rianna Mulder 2005)



Figure 4 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, the Andries Pretorius House seen from the memorial garden (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2006).



Figure 5 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, The Voortrekker Memorial Church seen from Church Street (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2006).



Figure 6 The Blood River Heritage Site, The bronze wagon laager from the centre interior (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2004).



Figure 7 The Blood River Heritage Site. The picture shows (right) the Daughters of Zion parading flags inside the laager at the 16th December 2007 celebrations (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 8 Ncome Museum, image of the side that faces the bronze wagon laager and imitates the Zulu battle position *izimpondo zenyathi* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2008).



Figure 9 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. The Shiva Perumal Temple (Photograph by Rianna Mulder 2006).



Figure 10 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. The Zulu homestead situated next to the Shiva Perumal temple (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2008).



Figure 11 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex. Herb garden situated at the entrance of the main building (Photographer by Cecilia Rodéhn 2008).



Figure 12 The Natal Museum. The ethnographic display on the balcony before extensions to the floor were made. The Natal Museum Archive. Date unknown (Photographer unknown).



Figure 13 The Natal Museum, one of the period rooms in the *History Hall* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 14 The Natal Museum, *New Facets of the Anglo-Boer War* staged in the *History Hall* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 15 Multicultural themes added to compliment the history presented in the *History Hall* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 16 The Natal Museum, *Traditional Zulu Dress* in the *History Hall* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 17 The Natal Museum, the *Sisonke* as it looked in 2005. The picture is taken from the entrance (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 18 The Natal Museum *African Art* in 2005. Picture taken from one of the two entrances (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 19 The Natal Museum, the *Sounds of Africa* seen from the entrance of the display (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 20 The Natal Museum, the *Indigenous Classifications*. The display was staged in different ways here in the mammal hall of the museum (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 21 The Natal Museum, *Stories of Human Origins* part of the *SOPHISA* display (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 22 The Natal Museum, the *San Hunter-Gatherers in Natal 2000 years ago*, part of the *SOPHISA* display (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 23 The Natal Museum, the *A New Way of Life* part of *SOPHISA* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 24 The Natal Museum, the *Gold, Spices and Portuguese Trade* part of *SOPHISA* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 25 The Natal Museum, the *Threads in Time* (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2005).



Figure 26 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, detail from the *Redisplay of the Great Trek* in the EG Jansen Extension (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2006).



Figure 27 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, The Church of Vow display hall, the *Education of the Voortrekker Child*. Note the Church benches and the pulpit in the front. Currently the display has been changed with more display cases placed in the centre of the display hall (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2006).



Figure 28 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, the *A river runs through it...Msunduzi*. The picture shows the centre of the display hall. The vertical pillars to the right and to the left introduce different themes which are dealt with in detail in smaller rooms (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 29 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, the *'A river runs through it...Msunduzi.* The detail of the shack, on the white cloth, is photographs projected to depict the violent period in the 1980s-1990s (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 30 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, the *A river runs through it...Msunduzi.* The picture shows one of the thematic rooms, here displaying different religions with inclusive emphasis (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2007).



Figure 31 The Msunduzi Museum Incorporating the Voortrekker Complex, the (new) *Birth of Democracy*. The bust in the centre is of Nelson Mandela (Photograph by Cecilia Rodéhn 2008).

